THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN FRANCE

C. H. PALMER

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN FRANCE

SOME ASPECTS

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS little book does not pretend to be authoritative. It represents rather a few impressions obtained by an Anglican who has travelled a little in France, has made friends among the French clergy and has indulged in some rather desultory reading. But the author will be quite content if it makes English and French churchmen know each other a little better.

In conclusion he would like to thank the Rev. W. J. Sparrow Simpson, D.D., for much kindly help and criticism in the writing of it, to Canon M. R. Newbolt for some helpful suggestions concerning Chapter VII. and to Mr. G. A. Parsons for reading through the proof-sheets.

Surbiton,
Surrey.

CHAPTER I.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH CATHOLICS.

TO English churchmen who are anxious to study the Roman Catholic Church abroad in a spirit of earnest and devout enquiry, the Church in France will invariably prove more than a passing attraction. And yet, at first sight, this might appear strange. Indeed anyone might think that if any rapprochement were to take place with those who acknowledge the rule of the Papacy, it would probably be through some section of German Roman Catholics that approaches would be made. At any rate, this would have been credible before the war. Up to the outbreak of that great catastrophe German science and philosophy had a far greater influence on the English academic mind than French learning ever had. There was far more in common between the English and German temperament than there was between the English and French temperament. It was considered wiser to send young people to be educated among the serious-minded German than among the gay and pleasure loving French. Many English church folk used to flock to the Rhineland and to Bavaria, in the good old days before war stirred up the evil passions of men's hearts, and be much edified at the Churches crowded for Mass and by the beautiful singing. Again the Passion Play of Oberammergau drew countless English churchmen, and these not merely from any one particular school of thought within the Church of England. They were usually vastly impressed not only by the reverent portrayal of the Passion of our Blessed Lord, but also by the truly Christian life of the people of this entirely Roman Catholic

village. In fact, many friendships were formed between the English visitors and their Bavarian hosts. But we have yet to learn that there has been any attempt upon the part of Bavarian Roman Catholics to enquire into the constitution and history of the English Church, and into its claims to be called Catholic. But French churchmen, on the other hand, have interested themselves much in *Ecclesia Anglicana*.

If we were to enquire why this should be so, we could put it down to two main causes. One is the fact of the recent "Conversations of Malines," which, though taking place in a Flemish town under the patronage of a Belgian cardinal, were in reality inspired some years ago by a French priest, the abbé Portal. The second reason is that the Catholic revival in the Church of England has produced a type of mind that is able to comprehend and derive profit from the lives and writings of the great French ecclesiastics. To such a priest as the late Rev. Gerald Rawlinson, the paper-covered French book, whether it were a work of mysticism, or of fiction, made an irresistible appeal, while we have only to cite the names of Monseigneur Dupanloup, the Curé d'Ars, Father de Foucauld, or that divinely quaint soul, Sainte Thérèse of the Child Jesus, as well as countless others, to realise the part that the French Church within the last hundred years has played in producing men and women who have been experts in mystical devotion to the person of our Blessed Lord and in the pastoral care of souls.

The so-called "Conversations of Malines" in reality owe their origin to a chance meeting between Lord Halifax and the late abbé Portal some thirty years ago in the island of Madeira, whither both men had gone to take a cure. The whole story has been a remarkable one and the abbé Portal gave an account of it not long before his death. This chance meeting brought about a warm friendship

between the two men. The abbé promised to work for a better understanding between the two churches and said he would try to make the Anglican position clear to his co-religionists. He published a pamphlet upon the question of Anglican Orders which aroused much interest. Monseigneur Duchesne entered the discussion, while Cardinal Gasparri declared himself friendly.

The question of orders was concentrated upon as it proved the basis of an amicable discussion, but the real object was to bring about some sort of contact between the authorities of both sides. The abbé subsequently visited both England and Rome. Pope Leo XIII. listened to him with great attention. He first intended to write a letter direct to the Archbishop of Canterbury suggesting a mixed conference, but afterwards changed his mind and wrote a letter to the abbé. In this was expressed the desire for reunion and suggested mixed conferences as the means to be employed. This seems to have been a mistake. The Archbishop would not reply to a letter not directly addressed to himself, and meanwhile certain in the Church of Rome who did not wish the abbé's most Christian efforts to succeed, started a campaign both in England and Rome against them. The result was that the commission eventually formed to deal with the question consisted exclusively of Roman Catholics, which reported against the validity of Anglican Orders, and the Pope in 1896 issued a proclamation to this effect. The disappointment was bitter and both Lord Halifax and the abbé realised that they must wait for another opportunity.

In the meantime the Great War broke out. This may have brought Englishmen and Frenchmen into sympathetic contact with one another. Less than two years after the Armistice came the Lambeth Conference with its encyclical in favour of reunion. The two men thought that their chance had come again. A year later they both looked to a prominent ecclesi-

astic of the Roman Church to whom they might appeal. They chose the late Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, who was most Christian, and the "Conversations of Malines" were the result. And, even if things do not seem to have advanced very much since the abbé's first meeting with Lord Halifax in Madeira, this good at least has been accomplished. Not only have many broadminded churchpeople in England sought to know more of the Church in France, but many French Catholics have been induced to study the Church of England, and much profit has arisen from this mutual knowledge. Monsieur Thureau-Dangin's great book, *La Renaissance Catholique en Angleterre*, has been most widely read in both England and France, and even in remote country districts in France, thanks to its influence, have priests been found who have been brought to take a sympathetic view of *Ecclesia Anglicana*. And we must admit in this connection that to the logical French mind the peculiarities and parties of our Church must be difficult of comprehension.

Thus, it is quite clear that if any reunion or scheme of intercommunion between Rome and Canterbury ever comes about it will be largely, if not entirely due, to the abbé Portal and the French part of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not intended to discuss the subject of reunion further in this book, whose object is to avoid controversial questions and concentrate upon fact, indicating and explaining the various activities of the French Church. It will be best to pass on here to the second reason that has brought English and French churchmen together.

The study of mysticism, the revival of the religious life in England and the growth of the retreat movement among ordinary English men and women has made English churchpeople turn to the writings of Frenchmen. Probably *The Introduction to the Devout Life* of St. Francis de Sales is the most widely read book in this connection. And more and more are

we beginning to study the life of this saint, who was, what all Englishmen love, a very gallant gentleman. Later, the lives and writings of Bossuet and Fénelon attracted the attention of English thinkers, while turning to our own day we owe it to the late Father Rawlinson to have popularised Rénè Bazin's life of Father de Foucauld, who could think of no sacrifice too great to give to our Blessed Lord.

No-one certainly has done more than Father Rawlinson to introduce and explain the French Catholic mind to English churchpeople. He did so in his little war-book, *Some Recent French Tendencies*, in articles written from time to time in the *Church Times*, and in the posthumous papers published under the title, *An Anglo-Catholic's Thoughts on Religion*. Physical infirmity prevented Father Rawlinson from making journeys to France in the cause of reunion, but as he said so truly himself, " The spiritual history of the race is not worked out by mobs, but by quiet men in studies," and his life was an example of this precept. His urgent message to his fellow priests was that they should follow the example of the great French directors and learn to " write in souls," and to do this effectively he recommended and practised himself a study of French literature, not only theological and mystical, but also fictional. For he strongly urged that the study of French fiction would assist priests in their psychological dealings with men and women. We shall have more to say on this under its own chapter. As a true Evangelical Catholic Father Rawlinson lays both France and England under a great debt in his keen appreciation of the lives and writings of Monseigneur Dupanloup, St. Francis de Sales, and Charles de Foucauld, the brilliant young officer and explorer, who turned first Trappist and then hermit. There is probably no Catholic nation that has produced such great directors of souls as the French, and Father Rawlinson in his desire that his fellow priests should,

like the abbé Huvelin, prove their competence in this most important office, did well to hold up as models St. Francis de Sales and the saintly Curé d'Ars.

There are some curious ideas current among certain types of English churchmen about the French Catholic. To the Evangelical, he is at the worst idolatrous and superstitious and a brand to be saved from the burning by means of itinerant mission preachers and a promiscuous distribution of the sacred Scriptures, or at the best a misguided individual who hopes to attain Paradise by certain outward material forms known as Sacraments. It might perhaps interest some of our Evangelicals to know that there is no truer evangelist in the whole of Christendom than the average French priest. In many other Roman Catholic countries the Evangelical criticism might perhaps hold true. But this is not the case in France. To any Evangelical who would stay a week or two in a boys' holiday camp the intense love of our Blessed Lord and the unselfish and devoted service rendered to Him and to the boys by the priest directors would be amazing and would compel his unstinted admiration. It is true that they use Catholic forms which are unusual and perhaps mistrusted by our Evangelical friend, but he would find that they were not mere mechanical methods of reaching heaven easily, but a real means of approach to Him, Who is the Author and Giver of all true life.

Then again the Frenchman is often completely misunderstood by the "moderate" Anglican whose idea of worship consists of High Mattins at eleven o'clock, hearty services, congregational singing out of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and a not altogether unjustifiable mistrust of things that are extreme and un-English where devotions are concerned. Many critics, not without reason, have been rather severe upon the Frenchman at Mass for worshipping by himself in a corner, taking no part in the singing,

seeming to be without notice of the priest at the altar, and too intent upon clicking the beads of his rosary or reading out of some manual of devotion. There are, we must confess, grounds for this criticism. And as a matter of fact the French themselves do not lack critics from their own ranks. A French military chaplain in the Occupied Area of Germany once remarked to the writer that he had been much struck when he first went to Germany by the wonderful corporate worship of the Rhineland Catholics, and the splendid singing of their chorales and hymns, translations of which are in many cases in Anglican hymn books. This criticism, then, against lack of congregational worship is not necessarily against Roman Catholics as such, but more particularly against the French. What is the explanation? It really lies in the difference between the English and German temperament upon the one hand and the French on the other.

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. Congregational singing, and henceforth corporate worship, is not necessarily non-existent in France. There is no finer example of it in any Christian place of worship in the world than the Creed solemnly chanted at High Mass in Angers Cathedral. Some few thousand can be gathered into this magnificent Gothic building and the Nicene Creed is chanted by the whole of the immense congregation in Latin together, while the priest, who is master of the music, conducts with his baton. In the same city hymns, some of them well-known in Anglican churches, are sung in Latin as well as more sentimental and somewhat lugubrious hymns in the vernacular. For the French language does not go well with music, and as a medium for hymn-singing has little to recommend it in comparison with English, Latin or German. This may be one of the reasons why hymn-singing is comparatively rare. For outside Anjou it does seem to be rare in France.

But there is another reason more potent than this. The Frenchman goes into his church essentially to pray. He treats prayer as a science, which few Englishmen do. Not only does he pray, he adores and he contemplates the great mysteries of our common faith. The Mother and Child, the Crucifix, the Blessed Sacrament, the Stations of the Cross, all these he is content to look at and we will hope applies their lessons to his own life. There is a story of a French peasant who was asked what he did when he spent hours on his knees in front of the Most Holy Sacrament and how he managed to concentrate all that time, and he replied quite naturally and simply, "I look at my God and He looks at me." This may appear startling and even shocking to many devout Anglican minds. But a well-known writer, of Nonconformist origin, upon the art of prayer has dwelt very strongly upon the need of silence and contemplation. The usual string of prayers simply becomes a monologue and without silence the man upon his knees cannot possible hope to receive an answer from God. We shall probably be glad enough to hold our own opinions as to which method is best for us, and we will content ourselves by noticing the result that is perhaps inevitable with the Frenchman that he will pray equally fervently in Mass or outside of it, so that he may ultimately become quite indifferent to the fact whether there be a Mass celebrated at the moment or not. Undoubtedly many French Catholics, such as the military chaplain referred to above, do find this lack of corporate spirit a hindrance to the development of the corporate side of Christian life.

We may therefore fairly assume that in the general way it is the French method to worship *à seul,* while English people are not really happy without an audible service and hymns "we can all sing"; except to the very musical, non-congregational services are alien to the religious temperament of the English, while the introduction in extreme Anglican churches

of silent Masses has been little short of disastrous, for it alienates many otherwise well-disposed people from the Catholic movement in the Church of England. It is at all times dangerous to attempt to impose upon English people foreign forms of devotion to which they are not accustomed.

But we would ask the moderate Anglican, who is always broadminded in his outlook, to try to understand even if he do not agree with the French expression of devotion, and, further, it will be shown later on in this book that this characteristic of the French is not necessarily self-centred, nor does it necessarily lead to a lack of good works. We would remark that mere gregariousness is sometimes confused with fellowship, and that the solitary at prayer is not always out merely for his own soul's salvation.

It goes without saying that English Catholics may learn much from their French brethren. Unfortunately in many cases they learn the wrong thing. It should be the genius of English Catholicism to strike out on its own lines where art is concerned and not always imitate the corrupt following of the Continent. A well-meaning cleric spends a fortnight's holiday in France and discovers that the local priest for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries wears an ugly square-shaped chasuble popularly known as a fiddleback, and in a truly wonderful desire to be a bit more Catholic than he is already, exchanges the Gothic vestments of his own church for this extraordinary garment. What he does not seem to realise is that the French priest could not afford a better vestment even if he wanted to, while the temperament of the Frenchman is on a different plane from that of the Englishman. Even if the former's taste be not merely bad, he is usually quite indifferent to forms, ceremonies and artistic effect. The Englishman is the most ritualistic animal in Europe and has a really keen appreciation of the beautiful. This is why his menfolk dress better than the menfolk of any other

country, this accounts for his great love of ceremony of all sorts, this is the reason of the wonderful popularity of Freemasonry in this country which satisfies the Englishman's love of ceremonial. The Englishman, it is true, has been largely distrustful of the ritual revival in his own church, but this is due to his distrust of the " Scarlet Woman " and a possible foreign domination. He is really not an objector to ritual as such, and where Catholic ceremonial is carefully and wisely explained by an understanding priest, he is usually most eager to adopt it, and in no country in the world are the servers so careful or so reverent as in England. And in churches of the Anglican Communion which do not come under the category of " Anglo-Catholic " it is rare that there is not some kind of ceremonial, whether it be a procession of the officiating ministers in academic hoods and black scarves, or the solemn collection of the alms by the black-coated sidesmen. This may have moved some cynic to describe Choral Mattins as the " High Wicked Man," but the instinct for doing everything decently and in order is thoroughly English and proper. The Frenchman is quite indifferent to all this. So perhaps the inevitable result is that his vestments are bad, his images tawdry, his processions ludicrous and his servers casual. He would probably treat the gift of a beautiful vestment with the same indifference with which the late Father Stanton is said, to have received the gift of an elaborately embroidered stole, merely remarking, " How beautiful! But, what can I use it for? I know. I will use it for choral confessions."

It should be remembered that whereas both French and English Catholics have had to fight, their fights have been different. Whereas the fight of the English Catholic has been largely for the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Most Holy Sacrament, for the principle of Sacramental Confession, and for

Eucharistic Vestments, a fight against the Protestant section of his own Church and against Erastian politicians who have sought to impede the progress of the Catholic revival in Parliament, the French Catholic has had to fight against his fellow-countrymen who would close his churches and his schools, expel the religious orders, and prevent the Faith once delivered to the Saints from being delivered to the French nation at all. And in this respect English Catholics can receive much encouragement from France. It is an undoubted fact that the success of the Catholic movement in England has been largely due to the valiant fight for truth put up by men such as Mackonochie and Tooth, and countless others who faced persecution and even imprisonment for their Faith. And in France the Catholic has had to fight for the right of his child to be taught the Faith, for the right of the Sisters of Charity to administer to the sick and practise their religion unhindered; he has seen the estates of the Church confiscated and the priests turned out of their dwellings to seek the alms of the faithful. He has seen such glorious houses of God as the Mont St. Michel and the Eglise de Brou stripped bare by an atheistic government, treated as "objets d'art" and open to tourists for a few *sous*, but deprived of all means of fulfilling the sacred purpose for which their pious founders originally built them, the celebration of the Holy Mysteries.

It is sometimes said that the Englishman is practical in his religion, though perhaps the converse is about the truth. Whereas the whole question of religious education in this country has been a perpetual series of compromises whose results seem to be a continual transference of the Church's schools from the hands of the Church to those of the local education authority, the French have solved the problem by subscribing themselves for the upkeep of the *écoles libres* for the benefit of Catholic chil-

dren. The Frenchman has a reputation for niggardliness, which is rather a hard stricture to pass upon him. He must be thrifty by nature because his income is usually very small, much smaller than an income for the same kind of work would be in England. And he has a very poor reputation for hospitality to strangers (though this is only partially true), but where it has been necessary to subscribe money for schools or church, he has shaken out the proverbial stocking with liberality and munificence, which might put some wealthy middle-class English congregations to shame. English Catholics might well pay regard to French Catholics in this respect.

English Catholics have found and will continue to find the writings of the great French ecclesiastics helpful in the matter of the proper exercise of the priestly office and in the art of prayer. English Catholics can find inspiration from French Catholics in their intense love of souls and their zeal for good works, and also should study, even if it would not be altogether wise to imitate it, the high technical training that is considered necessary before any man be found worthy to be admitted to Holy Orders. All these will be discussed later.

And so we would submit that the differences between French and English in matters of religion are not what they are because one is Roman and the other Anglican, but because of differences in racial temperament, which tend to encourage different forms of worship and devotion. It may be noted in this connection that Protestantism in France has ever failed to attract the man in the street (and this, not the sixteenth century persecutions, is the reason of its small numbers), whereas it has largely succeeded in England.

CHAPTER II.

CHURCH AND STATE.

IT is a common assumption to make that France is a Roman Catholic country. If by this is meant that those of its inhabitants who profess any religion at all are in the vast majority Roman Catholic the statement is true enough, for Protestantism numbers less than two per cent of the total population. But if on the other hand is meant that the government is Catholic, that the Catholic Church is established or that she receives as she might reasonably expect to receive any payments or consideration from the government in respect of her churches, her clergy, her religious orders or her educational institutions, the statement is quite inaccurate. Officially there is no religion in France, and since the cruel Separation Laws of 1905 the Catholic Church has been exposed to a series of persecutions, which though not sanguinary like those of Russia, have been subtly conducted by men who were avowedly out to banish God from France.

It might be a good thing to trace briefly the history of Church and State in France during the past hundred and fifty years. Immediately before the outbreak of the Revolution, during the coarse materialism of the eighteenth century, the state of the Church was indeed pitiable. The bishops were men of the calibre of Talleyrand, the cynical, witty, unscrupulous mixture of the Vicar of Bray and Voltaire, or of Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasburg, who tried to make love to the queen and was deceived by a trick in which a common prostitute figured. There is also a story related of a certain bishop who happened to have gone out hunting on

Corpus Christi Day and found a procession outdoors carrying the Blessed Sacrament; he seems to have ridden his horse into the crowd forming the procession and then asked in his ignorance as to what day and procession it was! The lower clergy, however, were in most cases devoted parish priests, but were grossly underpaid and scarcely more fortunate than the peasants from whose ranks they were recruited. The churches were largely in ruins, for the lords did not trouble to keep them up, unlike the English squires of the same period.

The first result of the Revolution was a hearty welcome from the lower clergy. On August 4th, 1789, at the famous all-night sitting of the States General, the higher clergy who formed the first Estate renounced their privileges and surrendered the tithes to the nation. Some of the clergy, particularly those of lower rank, were genuinely desirous of reform. But the revolutionary movement, as invariably happens in such cases, went beyond what was expected and was captured by extremists. On November 4th of the same year ecclesiastical property was voted to be at the disposal of the nation. In February, 1790, the monasteries were suppressed, while on April 13th, 1790, the Catholic religion ceased to be the religion of France. In July the Civil Constitution of the Clergy came into being. This echoed the Gallican aspirations of a former time. Canonical institution was conferred by the metropolitans on the bishops. The Papacy was in a sense disestablished in France, though not the Church. The metropolitans could announce their appointments to the Pope as head of the Church on Earth, but they were not confirmed by him. The dioceses were made identical with the newly created departments which had taken the place of the ancient provinces (the ecclesiastical administration is in nearly all cases the same to-day), the bishop and priests became the elected representatives of the new

dioceses. Gallicanism (despite the hope of many earnest Anglicans) has never been, any more than Protestantism, a real success in France. The Pope never accepted the arrangement and it was equally distasteful to the clergy, who somewhat naturally suspected a reform initiated by Talleyrand and other apostate clerics. A few accepted but the majority refused, either to emigrate or to meet with death during the Terror.

It was left to the mighty genius of Napoleon, as great a civil administrator as a military giant, to restore order out of this ecclesiastical chaos. The excesses of the Revolution had disgusted men's minds and they desired the return of the Catholic Faith and the priests. Napoleon's attitude to the Church was that of the late editor of the *Spectator* to the Church of England, or of the late Emperor of Germany to the Lutherans of Prussia, a mixture of patronage and officialdom. He thought quite astutely that religion was a good thing in any nation to inculcate in the people habits of morality, patriotism, hard work and thrift, and though he probably would have preferred some form of Protestantism as laying more stress on morality and less on the supernatural, he quite wisely realised that each country must have that form of religion that suited it best and that Protestantism was alien to the genius of the French people; it would be useless to establish a church not in communion with the Holy See. The result was the famous Concordat of 1801. Its provisions may be summarised thus:—

(1.) The Roman Catholic religion should be freely practised in France.

(2.) The First Consul should nominate the bishops while the Pope should confer canonical institution.

(3.) The presentation to parochial curés should be given to the bishops.

(4.) The French government would guarantee clerical stipends, which were to be paid out of the profits derived from the monastic properties confiscated by the Revolution.

It speaks well for the mighty genius of the great Napoleon that the Concordat lasted until 1905 (and the principle is recognised in two dioceses, Strasburg and Metz, to-day); in that year the Law of Separation disestablished the Church. Things had been drifting towards this for some time. The ruling politicians had been gradually becoming more and more anti-clerical. Marshal MacMahon, who had led the French army at Sedan, was the last President to be a practising Catholic. The clergy, especially the Jesuits, had been accused, rightly or wrongly, of interfering too much in politics, and the Dreyfus case brought the Church into very bad odour. It would be quite impossible here to go into this sordid business which centred round the Mulhouse Jew who was alleged to have sold military secrets to the German ambassador. A scapegoat had to be found and an attack was made upon the army and upon the Church. It must be remembered, too, that since the days of Ernest Renan a fashionable philosophy in France had been led largely to look upon religion and patriotism as beneath contempt. Renan in his *Vie de Jésus* gave a kind of tolerating sneer at Christianity, and it was the same man who had said of a regiment entraining for the front in 1870 that there was not a single man of them capable of an act of virtue. The result was the anti-clerical legislation of 1905 and succeeding years. What exactly has it brought about?

The traveller to Switzerland via Paris and Geneva or to Italy via the Mont Cenis route will pass through a little, provincial town, Bourg-en-Bresse. If he be an ecclesiologist or antiquarian he will probably want to break his journey at this place to visit the great

Church of Brou. It is one of the architectural wonders of Europe. It contains the tombs of the House of Savoy. It has been (with an extremely inaccurate setting) described in English by Matthew Arnold, who has written a wonderful poem about it. Travellers come from far and wide to see it. Yet the interior is devoid of all ecclesiastical ornament. It stands cold, empty, bleak and bare, a mere show place, the property not of Holy Church, but of the Ministry of Fine Arts. No Mass has been said there for over twenty years. It is but a heap of stones.

Take a train from Bourg along a branch line some ten miles to a wayside station called Simandre-sur-Suran. Walk three miles from this village into the foothills of the Jura Mountains up a valley full of the loveliness of God and the traveller will find a building which at one time belonged to the great Carthusian order; it is still called the Chartreuse de Selignac; it was built in this secluded spot to avoid the noise and clamour of the busy world. But, where are the monks? Alas, they have been dispersed to find a refuge in Spain or England or where they could, like all the other religious orders dispersed by the cruel law. For eleven months in the year this noble building stands empty, though by the grace of God Holy Mass is still celebrated daily one month in the year, for some jolly youths come there every August from Lyons for a holiday camp; we shall have something more to say about them in a subsequent chapter. For, after the good monks had been expelled and the property had come into the hands of the State, who had designs which fortunately failed for making it into a hotel, it was offered back to the Church at a price, and a wealthy and pious lady bought it and gave it to the Bishop of Belley as a kind of diocesan house; so it became the Church's once more.

Two buildings well-known to tourists that were seized were the Grande Chartreuse near Grenoble

and Mont St. Michel in Brittany. In the chapel of the latter we believe that of recent years Mass is allowed to be said once a year, the chapel being consecrated each time for the occasion; while there has more recently been a movement for restoring the Grande Chartreuse to its original purpose, though whether this will be done is a doubtful matter; it must be extremely profitable to the government that exacts its toll from the multitudes of the vulgar that come by char-a-banc to visit it.

However, it is pleasant to think that in not every way has the State triumphed. Not only did it take over the Carthusian buildings but also the liqueur business which was carried on by the lay brothers and brought a revenue in to the monastery. But alas! the government never discovered the secret of its manufacture and made a very inferior drink, while in our own country the House of Lords held that what the government sent over to England was not the genuine brand and had not the right to bear the Chartreuse label!

These are the kind of results that the chance traveller to France will see to-day as a result of the legislation. Let us now examine the history of this legislation. It really is bound up with two laws, the Law of Separation and the Law of Congregations. The real author of them was a certain Monsieur Combes. He started life as a seminarist, continued as a doctor of medicine and concluded by becoming a politician of the worst type. His final triumph was celebrated with a banquet and a remark that he had driven God out of France, and thus was accomplished the work that Gambetta started when he said in 1878, "Le Clericalisme, c'est l'ennemi." Men before Monsieur Combes, such as Monsieur Waldeck-Rousseau, might have been conciliatory and moderate; Monsieur Combes was avowedly out for plunder.

It was on July 30th, 1904, that diplomatic rela-

tionships between the French government and the Vatican were broken. There had been continuous diplomatic relations since the Concordat. The pretext was the action the Vatican took in the matter of two bishops, whom it summoned directly to resign without acting through the intermediary of the government. A year later Leo XIII. died, to be succeeded by the peasant Pope Pius X., a man of more piety than worldly wisdom.

Meanwhile things tended to play into the Catholics' hands. A scandalous system of espionage was discovered and brought before the French Chamber of Deputies which showed that the headquarters of French Freemasonry (a totally different affair from the highly respectable form of Freemasonry found in England), the Grand Orient Lodge, had organised *dossiers* of the beliefs and practices of army officers and their families. It may appear rather extraordinary to English people who live in a country where every soldier must officially have a religion and where, if he were to profess none, he would be immediately classed as "Church of England," that any officer who were to make a devout practice of his religion would be reported and marked out as unfit for promotion. Yet such was the case, and continued to be the case in France until the outbreak of the Great War. It used to be said that no Catholic officer during the ten years preceding 1914 had a chance of promotion, though a happy exception seems to have been made in the case of Marshal Foch. This would somewhat naturally explain the Catholic antipathy to Freemasonry. Monsieur Combes went out of office to be followed by the more moderate Rouvier cabinet, but unfortunately his work was done.

The act separating the Church from the State was carried by 301 votes to 233. It guaranteed Liberty of Conscience and the Practice of Public Worship, but the Republic no longer recognised nor re-

munerated any form of religion except in the cases of hospital and prison chaplains. Thus the poor *curés* lost the slender stipends which were guaranteed them under the Concordat and really were based on the monastic revenues. Inventories were to be taken of all property in the hands of religious bodies and this property was to be transferred to certain bodies known as *Associations cultuelles*, or bodies of citizens who would hold the properties in trust. If no such body were formed the property would pass into the hands of the government or commune. It was this last clause which meant that the Church lost its property.

The elections of 1906 returned the advanced radicals to power. In the same year Pius X. published his encyclical *Gravissimo Officii* condemning the *Associations cultuelles*. Some have held this to be a blunder on the part of the Papacy. But these associations could not be satisfactory to Catholics though certain Catholics thought that they might be given a trial. They would appear to give the laity rather a controlling voice in matters. Further, Article VIII. was objectionable. It enacted that should more than one association lay claim to the same Church the Council of State had the power of deciding between them, that is to say, it left to the secular arm the power of deciding which was the orthodox association and which the schismatic, it meant the power of State over Church, in fact, it was the old quarrel between St. Thomas of Canterbury and Henry II. Further, business transactions were to be under government inspection and control.

But whatever may be thought about these associations, the fact remains they were never recognised, and never came into existence. The buildings thereupon passed to the State or the Commune, which had already confiscated the stipends. Another law (January, 1907) allowed religious worship on sufferance in the Churches, but the clergy had no legal title to the

buildings. At the same time it must in fairness be pointed out that it was no longer legally incumbent upon the clergy and faithful to keep up the buildings, that was a matter for the commune or government. But what if a spiteful commune refused to do so? The French commune (something like the English parish council) is usually dominated by its mayor, who, like most little men in big boots, can be tyrannical to the extreme. Monsieur Barrés, in his *Grande Pitié des Eglises de France* has some heart-rending stories to tell. In one case when a mayor threatened to pull down a church, the Touring Club protested on the grounds that it had considerable architectural interest, to which this excellent official replied in language worthy of the Protestant Truth Society in this country, that the Church was a symbol of superstition and tyranny and that it must come down.

Of course, in cases like the Grande Chartreuse and the Church of Brou, no small profit accrued to the government from the tourists who paid for admission. But as Monsieur Barrés, who though an unbeliever was essentially a just man and much attached to the Church on moral and patriotic, though not religious, grounds, has shown again and again in his book, the most appalling sacrilege was done by local mayors, government agents who came to take inventories, and auctioneers commissioned to sell off the furniture. A circular issued at the beginning of 1906, empowering the tabernacles to be opened, did cause an uproar and was speedily withdrawn, and in other cases certain of the troops employed to carry out the orders were reluctant to take part and in others there were collisions between the populace and the troops.

Meanwhile the other attack upon the Church was made through the religious orders, who were expelled. It happens that the French, both men and women, seem to have a great vocation to the religious life, perhaps somewhat more than those of other Catholic

countries. It is said that France alone is responsible for half the Roman Catholic missionary effort throughout the world, and this is largely the work of the religious orders. Every type of order is found in France, from the contemplative Trappist to the practical follower of the rule of St. Vincent de Paul. These orders, in particular the Jesuits who were considered the villains of the Dreyfus business, were accused, rightly or wrongly, of being involved in politics, but whatever the truth of these accusations, and there is no doubt they were grossly exaggerated, France could ill afford to lose these devoted men and women who gave their lives to nurse the sick, teach the young, or else engage in quiet prayer for their more active fellow citizens. But the attack upon the orders was not exactly a recent one. Napoleon would rather have done without them, and they were as a matter of fact ignored in the Concordat. Eventually five were authorised, the Missions Etrangères, the Lazarists, the Fathers of the St. Esprit, the Sulpicians and the Brothers of the Religious Schools. All other congregations were regarded as unauthorised, though in actual practice they were not prohibited as they might have been, but flourished and multiplied to such an extent that at the time of the anti-clerical laws they greatly exceeded the number of religious houses in 1789, when they were great landowners, just as there are more religious orders in the Church of England to-day than at the Reformation. In July, 1901, the government passed the Law of Associations. No congregation could be founded without authorisation. Authorised congregations must give the prefect of their department a list of their members and an inventory of their property. But a decree of the Council of Ministers could deprive a congregation of its authorisation, while a decree of the Council of State was necessary for the foundation of a new establishment. A new establishment was capable of a wide interpretation

by the anti-clericals. For instance, if lay people with members of an existing order were to set up a hospital or school, that would be considered a new establishment and the decree was necessary.

Unauthorised congregations were to be dissolved, and must apply for authorisation within three months, nor could the members of an unauthorised congregation teach. There were as many as 17,000 unauthorised congregations which the government had decided to suppress, and this law gave control entirely into government hands without any right of appeal. Thousands of religious had to give up their holy work, either to seek refuge in England or Spain, or be secularised and return to the world, a tragic fate especially for many poor souls who knew little of the world and in the words of the good Father Monechal, "n'ont jamais fait de noviciat pour cette vie-là." Some, however, who had been teachers and had teaching diplomas were able to wear lay clothes and go on teaching in the schools.

In July 1904 prohibition to teach in schools was extended to authorised congregations also. The Church, however, acted energetically in founding the *Ecoles Libres*. These were Church schools, whose teachers had some kind of recognised diploma; sometimes the teacher would be a priest or seminarist who had qualified in this way, or a monk or sister whose community had been suppressed and gone back into the world. The Catholics have acted in a most commendable manner in the matter of these schools. Often a State school has been set up in a village, and afterwards, through the instrumentality of an energetic *curé* or teacher, a Church school, sustained entirely by the alms of the faithful in contrast to the State school which is maintained out of public funds, has been instituted in opposition, with the result that the parents have voluntarily taken their children away from the State school *(école laïque* or *école*

neutre) and sent them to the *école libre,* and the State school has had to close through lack of pupils.

An undenominational school in France may be a far worse affair than the corresponding institution in England. The schoolmaster often teaches active hostility not only to the Church but also to the idea of God and morality, and French Catholics are indeed commendable in the way they have tackled the problem. They have gone out of their way to deny themselves many of the good things of life in order to provide a Christian education for their children, and the National Society might do well in studying what has happened in many places in France. For instance, the abbé Audouin, one of the assistant priests at the great Church of St. Serge in Angers, was a few years ago appointed incumbent of the village of Fief Sauvin, near Beaupreau in Anjou (a village incidentally made famous in one of Rénè Bazin's novels). The previous occupant of the living had been apt to let things slide, and the new rector was determined to alter matters, and he was much perturbed by the fact that there was only a government elementary school. However, the Angevins are essentially religious, and with right good will they provided their rector with the means for paying a teacher. One in priests' orders, who happened to have the necessary qualifications, was obtained, and with one exception the whole of the children were withdrawn from the government school and went to the voluntary Church school *(école libre)* and the government school had to close down. This is not exceptional and we have found traces of it elsewhere, notably at a village near Tarare in the central part of France.

With great activity the French bishops dealt with the matter of the loss of the stipends of the clergy. A system of almsgiving and collection from the faithful was organised, known as the *denier de culte,* and this occupies a position somewhat analogous to the

English " Duplex " or " Free-will Offering " schemes, though planned somewhat differently. The French people have rallied nobly to the support of their clergy. In fact, it cannot be denied that the disestablishment worked wonders with the spiritual life of French Catholics. In a noble way they rallied round their church and they started to go to church more. The priests became heroes for their Faith, and just as Protestant persecution worked wonders for the Catholic cause in England, so did anti-clerical persecution work wonders in France.

" Que désire un republicain,
Vivre et mourir sans calotin,
La vierge à l'écurie,
Le Christ à la voirie,
Et le St. Père au Diable."

Thus sang the ardent anti-clericals in their hope of driving God out of France; as it was, it was the Church that was to save France.

Probably there was no more wonderful story of heroism than that of the French clergy during the war. Army chaplaincies had been abolished, but that did not mean the army lacked priests to say Mass before going into battle. One of the attacks made upon the Church was to annul the exemption given to priests and seminarists from being called up with the other conscripts to the colours, an exemption usual in most conscript countries. This was not because there was a shortage of recruits; it was thought that it might degrade their sacred calling. It did exactly the opposite. The clerical conscripts were universally respected, and when they were put to the test of the war, they gained renown by their deeds of valour, many of them gave their lives for their country, others gained medals and decorations or had the honour of being mentioned in despatches. Some of them served as combatants; perhaps a majority, not wishing to take part in action that demanded the taking of human life, preferred to

serve in the Army Medical Corps as ambulance men and hospital orderlies, but in whatever capacity they served their work won enormous admiration. Perhaps the most remarkable thing was the way in which numbers of expelled monks, who had sought refuge in other countries, who had nothing to thank France for and might have secured total exemption merely by staying away, came back spontaneously to fight for their country in her hour of need. On account of this heroic self-sacrifice many of these orders were allowed to return to France by the Poincaré government immediately after the war.

The Church became more popular. Diplomatic relationships with the Vatican were restored. What was known as the *Union Sacrée* or religious truce, came into being, whereby differences between clerical and anti-clerical were put aside and each stood shoulder to shoulder. Catholic officers were allowed promotion and the generalissimo at the latter part of the war, Foch, was a practising Catholic. There is a story of the pre-war naval atmosphere concerning a certain captain of a French battleship stationed off Constantinople. Wishing to make a direct attack upon the Church and religion, he invited several Turkish notables, members of embassies, as well as the Papal Nuncio (who learned what was going to happen and was able to refuse in time) and the English clergyman in charge of one of the Constantinople churches, who vouches for the truth of the story. When the company was assembled, he went through a solemn process of baptising a cat in milk in order to insult the Christian religion in a Mohammedan country. Such things in war time, typical of the cynical anti-religious atmosphere of the days before the great conflict, would have been looked upon with horror. The Church was put to the test in the war and came out right nobly. The soldiers wanted priests with them and respected them.

Until 1924, the post-war government of Monsieur

Poincaré maintained the *Union Sacrée*. The Diplomatic relations with the Vatican were continued, the orders were allowed to return, there was a feeling everywhere that things were going to be different. Further, there were now two French dioceses where the Separation Laws had never applied. Metz and Strasburg returned to France. Were these dioceses to be despoiled? They would rather have remained German, for the German government, believing strongly in Lenin's dictum that religion is an opiate for the people, had followed consistently a policy of assisting with money and moral support all forms of religion to keep the people orderly and contented with the powers that be. The Alsatians in particular are a very religious people. Many of them were a little doubtful of the advantages of a return to France, if the Church was to be disestablished and ill-treated. However, in the small district in southern Alsace which the French invaded and held from the outbreak of the war, various generals and politicians promised to the Alsatians returning to the *mère patrie* that their religious feelings would be respected, and these promises were repeated, after the Armistice, in Strasburg and other towns. For five years it would seem that France would keep to her promises. Monsieur Poincaré was not a practising Catholic himself, but his government held to the *Union Sacrée*. The State continued to provide the salaries of the clergy, Strasburg University was unique in being the only State university in France to provide a faculty for Catholic theology, religion was taught in the schools. Also, in the rest of France the friendly feeling of the war years was maintained and persecution died down.

But alas for the hopes of the Catholics. With the return of the Heriot government in 1924, a violent wave of anti-clericalism broke out. A fierce attack was made upon Christian teaching in the Alsatian schools. But the Catholics acted with tre-

mendous and admirable energy. They were fortunate in having as bishop in Strasburg Monseigneur Ruch, a prelate of great ability and much beloved and respected. He organised great protests in Alsace, culminating in the withdrawal for a few days by Catholic parents of their children from the schools. This attack upon religious education in Alsace was not considered an attack upon the Catholics only; both the Protestants (who are numerous) and the Jews supported Monseigneur Ruch. This is contrary to Protestant policy at the time of the Separation Laws, when French Protestantism, to its shame, largely supported the anti-clerical laws. (Monsieur Doumergue, the Protestant president of the present day, in conjunction with Monsieur Briand, shares the odium of having introduced in 1909 a bill which sought to prevent parents from objecting to their children receiving anti-religious instruction from State teachers.)

The Heriot government acted with crass folly in Alsace. The only result of their persecution was the impetus for a number of pro-German agitators to foment a home-rule movement known as the *Heimatbund*, and the foundation of a most pernicious journal advocating such a policy, *Die Zukunft*. It shows much for the good bishop's patriotism and love of France that he condemned both straightway. With the succession of the Painlevé ministry the next year, things much improved. The embassy with the Vatican which had been threatened was retained, the Alsatians were placated and activities against the Church were diminished. The result of the 1928 elections, however, betokens better things for the Church. But the return of three autonomists for Alsace is the direct result of the religious persecutions.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLERGY.

THE shortage of clergy in England is the most tremendous problem that the English Church has to face. This shortage arose out of the war. But the authorities of the English Church have not to face the fact that a vast proportion of her clergy lost their lives in the war and therefore made a vast inroad into the already diminishing ranks of the priesthood. In the last chapter it was shown how, after the anti-religious laws of 1905, the clergy no longer enjoyed exemption from military service granted in practically every other conscript country. But this, intended to degrade the priests and seminarists thus brought into the ranks, did exactly the opposite to what it was meant to do. When the conflict broke out in 1914 the clergy were only too happy to be fighting in the ranks with their fellow countrymen and even members of religious orders came back from exile to do their duty to France. The moral effect on the ordinary Frenchman was great and this probably had much to do with the revival of religion both during and after the war. But on the other hand large numbers of lives were lost. Of the 32,699 members of the clergy mobilised, 4,618, or an eighth of the total, made the supreme sacrifice. Turning to individual dioceses, Lyons led the way with 1,030 mobilised and 152 killed, the Breton diocese of Quimper being next with 766 mobilised and 120 killed, and Paris third with 710 mobilised and 113 killed. It is quite true that large numbers of English clergy served during the war, but the majority held commissions as army chaplains, and the death rate was not high. A deficit of over four thousand is not

easy to make up even if a normal flow of recruits were to present themselves.

The question then to consider is how far recruits are coming in and how the parishes are able to carry on. As in England, the stipend is not very high, and certainly does not make the career an attractive one, even for a celibate. It is true that there is no corresponding institution in France to Queen Anne's Bounty to collect his tithe for the country parson, to delay handing it over, and to charge him interest on his own money if he should require an advance. Tithe has long ago been swept away in France. But the anti-religious laws deprived the poor parson of the little stipend he was entitled to receive from the State, and he has been thrown upon the charity of the faithful who contribute to his upkeep by means of the *Denier du Culte*, and after a hundred years during which time the State provided the salary it was not altogether easy to make the faithful give as generously as they might to the support of their spiritual pastors. It is in reality extremely difficult to define in terms of English money the actual salary of a French priest, for the simple reason that it is almost impossible to compare any kind of wage or salary with similar payments in England. Even before the war when exchange was normal, French salaries (e.g., those of civil servants) were ridiculously low to English ideas, but the mode of living of a Frenchman was very much simpler. Mr. Bodley, in his lectures before the Royal Society on the disestablishment of the French Church, instances the Court of Cassation (the supreme appeal court) trying an important matter of litigation between a railway company and other big interests where vast sums of money were involved, whose three judges and all the court officials did not receive together as big a remuneration as the salary of a London police court magistrate.

When, therefore, French priests are mentioned as

receiving payment in a few thousand (or even hundred) francs per annum, to take 120 francs as being the equivalent of a pound and turning the amount into English money is absurd. The priest has other revenues besides his diocesan stipend, such as fees for baptisms, marriages and burials. He also receives a certain amount in kind from his parishioners. In the seminaries the *soutanes* and other clothes are provided, and this sometimes happens in the cases of priests attached to institutions, where "all is found" and the cleric receives a little pocket money in addition. Nevertheless, when these facts are taken into account, the French parish priest is a poor man. Monsieur Bordeaux has described what he calls "La glorieuse misère des prêtres."

"I went one day to a mountain parsonage and had a chat with a priest, who first astonished me and then won my admiration. The parson was digging up his potatoes, his cassock tucked up. He made excuses for his appearance, asked me to go into a room which had never been repaired, and offered me a glass of wine, which I was very glad to drink, as I was thirsty. But he scarcely took a drop from the bottom of his glass, although he was fatigued after his work. He started talking about his career. Formerly professor in a junior seminary he had himself asked his bishop to let him take up parish work, that he might come more into contact with ordinary people. His start had been full of difficulties: his fervour had been misunderstood, and then with the peasants who are so reserved you never know how far you can go. They don't say anything, they never express a word of gratitude or of affection. It requires the greatest courage to go on working without knowing the results of one's work. Nevertheless he was beginning to have an impression that the good seed was beginning to bear fruit, though it was an impression only.

"Meanwhile, I was noticing that this man, who only spoke to me of spiritual things, was wearing a very worn-out cassock, whose original black, by dint of much usage, was becoming greenish. He had not drunk his wine. I started talking to him in a casual sort of way. 'Did the *Denier du Culte* ensure the priests a sufficient livelihood?'

"'The bishop has been very good to us this year. He has been able to increase our stipends to 1,200 francs.'

"'One thousand two hundred francs? You can't live on that. But you have means of increasing it—marriage and burial fees?'

"'Quite so. Quite so.'

"'That should make a nice little sum.'

"'I have nothing to complain of.'

"At last after further enquiry I was able to find the exact state of his resources. He just managed to double the bishop's stipend, to make 200 francs a month.

"'And how do you live?'

"'There is the garden which I look after myself. It gives me plenty of vegetables, a little wine and flowers for my church.'

"'Wine! You scarcely drink any.'

"'I don't drink it. But I get accustomed to that. But, here it is not done not to offer any to your guests.'

"'And meat. You have it daily?'

"'Once a week, on Sundays. But I am not fond of it. It is not a sacrifice.'

"'A cassock, is that dear?'

"'I don't know. They gave me one at the seminary. I have never bought another.'

"'Could you buy another?'

"'Not now, certainly. But that will come. God will provide.'

"He began to blush and, to change the subject,

started to talk about the war memorial he was putting up in the church.

" Meanwhile, as I was going back I stopped at the house of a peasant who had just lost a son in the fighting in Syria; he had already received a pastoral visit from the priest. A little further on I met an old woman pushing a little cart and who was wearing a pair of new mittens, a present from him. This poor priest found the means of doing all sorts of kindnesses, spiritual and material."

The author concludes his little article by saying that he fears that since the war the early enthusiasm for religion is beginning to wane, and he hopes therefore, that the people will not forget the enormous increase in the cost of living, at least six times over pre-war prices in France, and subscribe more liberally to the *Denier du Culte*. He seems to think that in certain cases this is not supported as liberally as it well might be.

But the story is interesting as showing the sort of thing that many priests have to put up with. It is the life of an agricultural labourer as far as material comforts go, with a very great deal more expected from him. Of course such conditions are not necessarily universal in France. It is really very difficult to find out exactly how a priest does live. For if a stranger visits him, he will give of his very best so that an ignorant person might be deceived and think him quite comfortably off. The cold chicken of the English parson's wife, said to have been the late Archbishop Temple's pet abomination, would be unknown in a French country rectory if the incumbent were entertaining a guest to dinner. There might be five or six courses, besides wine of the country, but the guest might have an uncomfortable feeling afterwards that his host had denied himself for a week in order that the stranger within his gates might have a sumptuous meal.

Yet, despite this poverty, the Church has gone

from strength to strength since the spoliation laws and has found no lack of vocations among her children. This has partly arisen through the war. A large number of the priests of to-day received their vocation in the trenches or as a direct result of the war. There were two devout Catholic laymen both engaged together in a profitable business at Lyons. When the war came, one was mobilised, the other was exempt on medical grounds. The former made the supreme sacrifice at Verdun. When the news reached the other of his brother's death, he decided to throw up his business career and study for Holy Orders at the seminary at Francheville. He is now a priest, and using his business ability in managing a young men's hostel in connection with the Prado. A friend of his who had served seven years in the garrison at Belfort and had held a good position in a business house also decided to throw up his secular career to become a priest. The seminary at Issy near Paris had among its 180 ordinands in 1920 55 ex-officers. Another remarkable phenomenon during the war was the way in which large numbers of lads, mostly too young for military service, entered the seminaries.

To what class do the priests belong? It is sometimes stated in a general sort of way that they belong to the peasant class, but that is not a true generalisation to make. The fact of the matter is that they are recruited from all classes, and the type of education they receive in the seminaries turns out some extremely well-educated men, from whatever class they may have sprung. There used to be a saying that the Oxford and Cambridge education of the English clergy ensured that there was at least one well-educated man in every English village. It would be just as true to make the same remark about the French country priest. The long and careful training of the seminaries, though it may be considered by some a trifle narrowing, does in fact turn out

extremely well-educated men, as anyone who numbers members of the French priesthood among his personal friends will testify. Large numbers of country yokels' sons furnish recruits for the priesthood, but so also does the *bourgoisie*. The truth is that most devout Catholic parents whatever their social standing are only too glad to give at least one son to God, and the Church.

It is usual, too, for the parish priests to look for vocations among their lads in the various *patronages*, and if a boy even in the elementary school stage shows an aptitude above his fellows and expresses the desire for it, he will start by reading in the evenings with his padre. Afterwards he goes on to the junior seminary *(petit seminaire)* and finally to the senior seminary *(grand seminaire)*, and so through the various minor orders, if his vocation be sustained, until he arrives at the priesthood. Since the war, as we have seen, large numbers have been recruited into the clerical ranks who did not receive vocations as lads, but came in as a result of conversion during the great conflict. The dioceses are, as a rule, coterminous with the departments, and it generally happens that a young man born in a certain department will receive his training at the diocesan seminary and afterwards be ordained to that diocese and remain there all his life, though a lad with special talent may have the good fortune to be sent to St. Sulpice or even to Rome.

For administrative purposes France is divided into sixteen archdioceses, each containing about half a dozen dioceses. The diocese as a rule corresponds with a department. (The French department is akin to the English county, though it is a creation as recent as the French Revolution which abolished the ancient provinces and constructed the departments.) This appeals to the logical and methodical French mind. Whereas the London County Council, the Metropolitan Police Area, the London

Postal Service, the London Telephone Service and the Ecclesiastical Diocese of London have each an entirely separate limit, in France it would be the other way about entirely; the boundaries of Paris are very sharply defined. Sometimes, however, one diocese comprises more than one department. For instance, Strasburg includes both the Upper and the Lower Rhine, while the archdiocese of Besançon contains the three departments of Haute-Saône, Doubs and the Territory of Belfort. As a rule the departmental chief town is also the seat of the diocesan, but here again it is not the invariable rule. The chief town of the Jura is Lons-le-Saunier, but the see city is that of St. Claude.

The bishops of France have the reputation of being "safe" men and able administrators, rather than outstanding prelates, but France is certainly fortunate in many members of her hierarchy. It includes such men as Cardinal Dubois of Paris, Mgr. Gibier, the able organiser of the diocese of Versailles, Mgr. Julien of Arras who is distinguished as a philosopher and savant, Mgr. Ruch, who was translated in 1919 from the see of Nancy to that of Strasburg, where he has distinguished himself by handling a delicate situation with consummate ability and tact, and many others of equal renown.

Each diocese is divided into deaneries which are subdivided into parishes. It seems scarcely necessary to point out that the vicar of a parish is known as the *curé* and the assistant curate as the *vicaire*. In Brittany incumbents are sometimes known as *recteurs*. Patronage is entirely in the hands of the bishops, and priests usually remain within the diocese of their ordination. The incumbent of the principal parish in a deanery acts as rural dean *(curé-doyen)*.

The point that strikes anyone who numbers French priests among his personal friends is their remarkable spirit of sacerdotal vocation and the great desire to give up everything for their work. And in this con-

nection their views upon the subject of clerical celibacy are interesting. Quite apart from the fact that they are forbidden by the laws of their church to marry, a prohibition which they consent to gladly, they are one and all convinced that their work would never give them time to pay proper attention to family life. They are amazingly hard working and they would quite well feel that even if they were allowed to marry it would not be fair of them to do so, for they could not devote themselves properly to their families. It is as much a respect for the Sacrament of Holy Marriage as for the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the laws of the Church. It is extremely unlikely that any Gallican campaign for an independent Church where the clergy would be allowed to marry would ever find much favour in France. Certainly the French priests are recruited from the pick of French manhood and it might be legitimately urged that they would make the best fathers of families, especially in times when there is a pressing need of an increase in the population. But on the other hand it was pointed out at the *Semaine Sociale* at Grenoble that it was just in those dioceses where Catholicism was strongest, where there were large numbers of men and women living a celibate life under rule, that there were the greatest standards of sexual morality and the largest families. The rule of celibacy was an ideal to which the French laity looked up. It would therefore be incumbent upon the clergy to keep to it.

" I have other gardens to cultivate," said a French priest to the writer, who asked him whether he spent much time in his garden; and he waved his hand in the direction of his parish. The garden of the soul is the passion of French priests; they are true Evangelicals.

CHAPTER IV.

WORKS.

Ecclesia Gallicana fully realises that Faith without works is dead. There used to be a saying that Protestantism looked after men's bodies to the neglect of their souls, Catholicism looked after men's souls to the neglect of their bodies, while the Church of England tried to do both and failed to do either. This, of course, is quite opposite to the truth, both as regards the Church of England and the Church of France. In the latter, indeed, her priests and religious orders spend their whole lives in the service of their fellow-men. A rich lady of a suburb between Paris and Versailles on being asked whether her parish priest ever came to dinner at her house replied, "Alas, he never has time to come. *Il s'occupe toujours avec ses oeuvres.*" This is true of countless town priests in France; right well do they carry out their Master's precept, "Occupy till I come."

The generic name for a work among the laity in France is *Patronage*. This covers everything in the nature of a club for girls, boys or men. As a matter of fact the word is not confined to church institutions; the success of the Catholic *patronages* has been so great that the anti-clericals first attacked them and then ended up by imitating them, by establishing lay *patronages*, where all the material advantages of a Catholic work were given, but the important thing was lacking, namely, religion.

The simplest form of *patronage* is the evening club similar to the men's or girls' club attached to an English Church. From this a very interesting

development is the *Colonie des Vacances;* the members of the club are taken away for a few weeks in the summer by their priest to a country or seaside spot. A similar plan is, we believe, followed by Canon Peter Green in Manchester, and perhaps the summer outings of the Children's Country Holiday Fund may be likened to it. But, naturally, the Catholic religion and not merely a summer holiday lies at the back of the movement. To study a typical *Colonie des Vacances* let us look at that held every August at the *Chartreuse de Selignac*, which has been mentioned in a preceding chapter on Church and State.

The moving spirit of the holiday camp is a certain Lyons priest, a typical descendant of the good Père Chevrier, Lyons' slum saint, Father Pey, formerly *vicaire* of the Church of our Lady of the Assumption. Absolutely devoted, though perpetually striving against ill-health, he lives entirely for his people and his lads, and strives to minister both to their souls and bodies. With the help of two or three priests and several seminarists, he gives the youngsters, drawn from every quarter of Lyons, both a first rate education in the spiritual life, and a real good time in the material sense.

And what do the boys do at Selignac? As Père Gerin, one of Père Pey's priest assistants, would say: " Il a y des choses et des choses et des choses, mais, avant tout, on doit garder un esprit très large." And that perhaps describes the life rather exactly. They do a great many different things, but they always strive to keep a wide outlook. They play football, despite the scorching sun blazing down upon the bare limestone rock of the Jura, and not always keeping to strict Association rules as to eleven a side, but a sporting game, nevertheless, with a wholesome respect for the referee's whistle of Père Gerin. They go for long walks, sometimes trekking for two or three days in the country, sleeping out and getting up early for an open air Mass. There are sham

fights between reds and blues (the French have essentially a military temper and there is no game they really like better); some of the braver ones are "mentioned in despatches" and others shout *"à bas les rouges"* or *"à bas les bleus"* in a style worthy of the Jacobins. Cricket has not been discovered at Selignac yet, but rounders is voted good sport, as well as a highly scientific game of hide-and-seek. The older ones like both to talk and ask interminable questions. A rather shy, young Englishman spent a few days at the monastery and was looked upon with a good deal of curiosity, especially when he went to chapel with the others. So a small boy was moved to ask an abbé:—

"Est-ce que l'Anglais est Catholique?"

"Non, Anglo-Catholique."

"Qu'est que c'est que ca? Il me semble la même chose."

We fear this sentiment would perhaps hardly find a responsive echo in the palace of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, but the mistake was somewhat natural. Another youngster wishing to prove a good *cicerone* to the English guest, went up to him one day and said somewhat confidentially, "Monsieur, savez-vous, que les Trappistes sont les plus gros hommes dans toute la France?" The visitor turned to his interlocutor, a somewhat chubby little creature and said lovingly, "Eh, mon gars, et veux-tu aussi être Trappiste?" at which the lad looked exceeding sorrowful.

At night there is a great ceremony in the refectory when one of the directors mounts the *rostrum* and reads the journal of the day to the colony. If the shades of the old monks ever revisit the dining-hall they must have a rude shock when they see and hear the present occupants. Sometimes there is a little impatience if there is a mishap in the kitchen, and Mère Roche (another Lyons' saint who will occupy one day a high place in the kingdom of

heaven) or perhaps one of the directors who may be acting as cook, is loudly denounced by thumpings on the table and the banging of glasses. But the banging is of a friendly sort and develops into cheers when the long expected food arrives. There are more cheers when the journal is read, especially when Pierre Monard is reported to have gone to sleep during the reading of the journal the previous evening, or when the "reds" of the sham fight are reported to have been annihilated by the "blues."

But the central place of the colony is the chapel. It is visited often, some English people might say too often, but that is a difference between English and French; whereas churchgoing is a strain and an effort for us, something for the elect only, to a Frenchman it is as natural as eating one's dinner. At Selignac there is no scruple about outward things. Many priests would prefer Gothic vestments if they could afford them, but having not the wherewithal are content with fiddlebacks. Father A—— does not like birettas, and omits to wear his on his way to the altar, but Father G—— wears his during breakfast.

But these things are mere trifles, what really matters is the evangelical fervour of Father Pey and his friends. What strikes the visitor to Selignac most is an extraordinary love attached to the Person of our Lord, coupled with devotion to His Blessed Mother. This more than anything else impresses the visitor. If some of our more old-fashioned Evangelicals could get over some of their prejudices they might be very happy at Selignac. The Sacraments are sought as a means of approach to Him that they may love and serve Him more faithfully. For this the boys sing hymns as they walk in procession round the cloisters; for this the new bells were "baptised." Some would say this perpetual worship would turn boys into prigs. Not a bit of it. It seemed that everyone worked better and played

better. As for Père Pey, whether celebrating Mass in the chapel or larking around with the boys in the cloisters, one purpose and one purpose only is the driving force, and that is to bring one and all into a more certain union with the Master Whom he serves.

The Colony of Selignac is a product of Lyons, where, despite the fact that Monsieur Heriot is mayor, there is an abundance of piety and good works among the large industrial population. The presiding genius of the religious life of the city is Père Chevrier, a slum priest and contemporary and friend of the Curé d'Ars, who lived not very far away. Like Father Lowder and Father Dolling, he devoted himself entirely to work among the poor and down-cast. On one occasion the twin rivers of the city had flooded their banks and invaded the lower floors of the dwellings of the working classes; Père Chevrier took a boat and himself went round rescuing the families from the flooded rooms, often at the risk of his life, the stream threatening to overturn his boat more than once. His great work is the Prado. This was originally a vile mixture of music hall, drinking saloon and brothel. It was even such a scandal that many working class families in its neighbourhood removed elsewhere because of its unsavoury associations. Suddenly a miracle happened. It was announced as being up for sale. The abbé said that he would buy it. No-one knows how he raised the money, prayer had certainly a great deal to do with it. Suffice it to say that the money was raised and the foul property came into the hands of the Church. A story has it that like our Lord armed with a whip of small cords the brave purchaser went and cleared out the original inhabitants.

He and his helpers thereupon used the building as a hostel for poor children. A number of the homeless, ragged and unbaptised were collected and brought into the Prado where they were lodged, fed,

clothed, educated and instructed in the Faith of the Church for six months. Then they returned to the outer world to make room for a fresh batch and so on. This was a weak point in the scheme, there was not sufficient room to house the young guests permanently. The good priest wanted to get as many as possible under his influence, and so the change every six months. Yet, he endeavoured to keep in touch with them as far as possible after they had left the Prado, which he did by means of evening clubs and reunions, besides inviting them to come to Mass in the chapel, and many of them made good in after life. On one occasion the abbé was waylaid by robbers in a back alley who relieved him of his watch, but let him go. Suddenly, he heard them run after him crying, "Père Chevrier!" They were old Prado boys who had discovered his initials engraved on the back of the watch, and they implored his forgiveness. He invited them to come to see him next day, which they did—in the confessional. So great was the fame of Père Chevrier that when he died the crowd that thronged his funeral besought the permission of the municipal authorities that his body might be buried within the Prado precincts. Recently a process for his beatification has been put forward.

The good Père Chevrier has been long dead, but the Prado and the spirit he inspired live there still. The Prado is now a great institution with a seminary for young men, a club for working men and numerous *patronages* attached. There is also in connection with it a hostel for working boys managed by the abbé Audin. This is for the benefit of working lads who come in from other districts to seek employment in Lyons, and are invited to lodge in the hostel instead of drifting into undesirable lodgings. The abbé Audin is a typical Lyons priest of rare charm and evangelical fervour. Of a large Catholic family, he was originally in business with his brother, but

after the latter had been killed in the fighting round Verdun, he determined to give up the prospects of a lucrative career in favour of a life of poverty and sacrifice. He has always been especially devoted to work among young men and he is associated with the abbé Pey in his work at Selignac. His business training stands him in good stead when he has to deal with the hostel's accounts, and also to take up the somewhat unenviable task of appealing for money.

Another similar hostel is that under the charge of the abbé Roussel near the Rive Droite station at Versailles. It is run in connection with a great work for the support of family life inaugurated by Monseigneur Gibier, the able Bishop of Versailles and his vicar-general. The lads, like those at Lyons, lodge in the hostel and go to work every day. They live in dormitories and meal in a common dining hall. On Sundays they are taken for excursions by the abbé or his lay assistants, or play games. There is a chapel attached to the institution where Mass is said daily, but the only attendance that is compulsory is on Sundays; yet the weekday attendances are very good and the lads learn to love their chapel.

The question of temperance work is naturally difficult in a wine-growing and wine-drinking country like France, but it must not be supposed that the Church is indifferent or hostile. Quite the opposite is the case. It is true that any form of prohibition is rightly condemned by the Catholic Church, which holds that it is the abuse, not the use of God's gifts, that is the sin, and that to condemn wine as such would be to fall into the heresy of Manichaeism. But among young people there is a distinct movement to teach habits of temperance in alcoholic liquor. At the Versailles hostel a special feature is made of this, and the young men are definitely taught the ill effects of excess of alcohol upon the human body.

One feature of this hostel, which also applies to most *patronages*, that would be remarked at once by

Englishmen with an upbringing from a public school is the very strict supervision by the priests of their young charges. The wisdom of this may be doubted. It may also look like espionage. A prefectual system inculcating the boys with an idea of responsibility would appeal to Englishmen much more. But the notion underlying this supervision is at bottom good. There is a kind of idea that the youngsters may come to some moral harm if there is not someone perpetually looking to see what they are up to. And with the French priest's evangelical love of souls, he feels all the time he must be with them.

Monseigneur Gibier has made in the town and diocese of Versailles a very effective organisation of works in connection with family life, and one of the principal is an infant welfare centre where the mothers may bring their babies. The French Church preaches the doctrine of the *Famille nombreuse*, but it does not, as some have implied, leave the unfortunate mothers to bring up their families without help. Fully realising the importance of giving working mothers the right advice and help in rearing their children, the *foyer* has been started, and it has been most successful.

The Boy Scout Movement was not at first altogether welcomed by the ecclesiastical authorities, but after troops had been started by both Protestants and the "lay" element, the movement was taken up and there are some splendid Catholic troops in Paris and elsewhere. As regards work among women and girls this is very much in the hands of the religious orders. Clubs and Holiday Camps for girls are usually organised by the parish priest, who puts a sister in charge. There are so many orders in France that are devoted to an active life that the female element of the Catholic population is quite as well looked after as the male. Naturally the religious orders have had a great deal to do with education, when the government has allowed them.

A great interest has been shown recently by the Church in social problems and the laity are instructed in ways of right thinking on such matters. Many priests are most successful in organising study circles among their young men in the evenings. A particularly successful study circle of this kind has been organised by Monsieur Jacquot, incumbent of Audincourt in the Pays de Montbeliard, and his *vicaires*, about whom we shall have more to say later on. In industrial districts like Audincourt the Church has been able to assist in opening sick and benefit clubs, and probably in Alsace this has been most successful. A very able priest of Mulhouse, the abbé Cetty, was very desirous of getting the Alsatians out of the grip of the Jewish moneylenders who abound in Alsace more than in other parts of France. To this end he was instrumental in starting a savings' bank where the working men could put by money until they needed it, and he was also willing to lend money where capital was required from the bank for a reasonable rate of interest. The result was a complete discomfiture of the usurers. Much more might be said of this remarkable priest, who was much attached to France, and died in a newspaper office in November, 1918, whither he had gone to enquire whether the French troops had yet entered the town after the retreat of the Germans.

Of work in the country it is not so easy to speak, but it must not be thought that French country clergy are lazy or neglectful. Conversations with French country priests leave the impression that *patronages* are not so necessary nor so easy to organise in the country, but there is much room for individual work. A devoted parish priest, as say the *curé* of Custins in Lorraine, will find plenty to do with his choirboys and village club, and rather sadly he might complain that his activities would not allow him much time for meditation and study. It would be easier for him than for a town priest to

follow the careers of his young men and watch over them when the time came for them to be called up to the colours, and follow their careers by correspondence. A very interesting feature of country work is the fact that many wayside churches are places of pilgrimage, and thus the country priest is brought into touch with the townsmen who come out to these places.

But there is one *patronage*, the Philippins of Rouen, which holds rather an unique place and is of great interest to English people, and to this we intend to devote the whole of the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILIPPINS OF ROUEN.

IN the year 1879 two men were walking one day along the coast road from Honfleur to Trouville. Some who know the latter place and have usually associated it with wealthy and vulgar tourists will perhaps ask, "What good can come out of Trouville?" But these two ardent young men, whose hearts were bursting with the fire of the divine love, were not wealthy tourists. They were two poor seminarists. They were not going along to the most detestable of watering places to amuse themselves, but their goal was the great Calvary which commands the sea-coast at that place. Here they threw themselves on to their knees and placed before our Lord all their plans and dreams for bringing the souls of young men to Him. When they arose from their knees, the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Rouen and the *patronage* known as the Philippins were virtually founded.

"And it came to pass as they reasoned and communed together Jesus himself went with them." What visions these two young men, 24 and 18 years of age respectively, must have had as they walked along the sea shore together. Dreams of the priesthood, of missionary work, of a life of prayer, of poverty and sacrifice, a life surrounded by good works and *patronages* of all kinds.

Eight years later the younger of the two friends was assistant priest at Elbeuf in Normandy and in the clergy house met one day Bishop Jaudel, founder of the Oratory of St. Philip in France. This wise and good prelate was much attracted by the young

priest, heard from his lips all about his dreams and understood them, and gained from him a promise that one day he would found with his friends a branch of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri at Rouen. This was actually done in 1893 by Cardinal Thomas.

In October of the same year the beginnings of the *patronage* were laid. Some youngsters from 13 to 15 years old were brought in by the Cardinal's secretary, Mgr. du Vauroux. These lads were delighted with the quarters provided for them by the Cardinal, but there was one thing lacking, a statue of our Lord. With that wonderful generosity that invariably characterises the very poor, these lads themselves subscribed for a large figure of Christ to be set up in the recreation room.

Yet, these poor children, collected from the worst slums of the Norman capital, were sadly lacking in knowledge of the verities of the Faith. They must have some instruction. And so the young priest-founder, abbé Auvray, inaugurated a mission for them. For a whole week they came to the *patronage* at seven o'clock in the morning before they began their work and again in the evening at eight o'clock after it was finished, to be taught what it is necessary for a Christian to believe for his soul's health. The success of this mission exceeded the wildest hopes of its promoters. Not only did the youngsters learn to love God, but to love each other also.

Yet, our Lord has taught by the parable of the mustard seed, and also by the example of His own death, that for a thing to live it must first suffer pain and die. After the good work had had a year's life, in October, 1894, certain circumstances compelled the closing down of the *patronage*. The building had to be sold.

But the promoters were not downcast and in the following April a few rooms were hired in the Rue St. Nicholas by the abbé Auvray and a layman,

Monsieur Edouard Montier. The difficulties were great. Monsieur Auvray with delightful good humour recounted them to the lads at the jubilee festival held in 1919. He opened the *patronage* with a magic lantern show, but there were no slides. He and another priest sat up all night making slides of their own with a paint box and pieces of glass, which started to melt when they were put into the imperfectly ventilated lantern. When he had been forced to close down the previous year, the good abbé did not despair. He kept in touch with the members by inviting them to his clergy house or to the rooms of Monsieur Montier, his lay assistant, afterwards to become his brother-in-law, and take over the direction of the work. The accommodation in the Rue St. Nicholas, lent under certain conditions by the local president of the Catholic Union, was small, but, thanks to the energy of the young layman, Monsieur Montier, new quarters were leased in the Rue St. Romain. On Refreshment Sunday, 1896, the Philippins made their Exodus to the Rue St. Romain.

Henceforward through the energy of the two directors the *patronage* went from strength to strength until to-day it numbers hundreds of members. The feast of the Exodus to the Rue St. Romain is invariably kept on the fourth Sunday in Lent to this day; it is considered as the greatest event in Philippin history, and a poem was composed by Monsieur Montier likening it to the Exodus from Egypt. On January 2nd, 1898, a medical student started a journal, *Le Petit Philippin;* the same year a party of stretcher bearers was organised to assist in carrying the sick who go to Lourdes to be cured, in 1899 a gymnastic section was founded, the next year a study circle, in 1905 a St. Vincent de Paul section for the work among the poor.

The founder was afterwards promoted to be incumbent of an important parish in Le Havre, and

though his love for the Philippins never abated, the work fell necessarily more upon the shoulders of Monsieur Montier, who undoubtedly throughout its history became the guiding spirit of the *patronage*. And in this it became remarkable, when it is compared to other similar institutions in France, for it became essentially a laymen's movement. Of course, there was always a chaplain to do the work that only a priest can do, and the Philippins have had a succession of most noble and devoted chaplains. But the organisation fell more and more upon Monsieur Montier's shoulders. A barrister by profession, a classical scholar and a writer and poet of little short of genius, he stands one of the most remarkable figures in Catholic France to-day. He organised the Philippins in a manner very similar to the way in which Mr. Clayton has organised Toc H. They are both out to influence the adolescent in the same sort of manner, and are out for the same ideals, namely, mutual service, responsibility and love. But Monsieur Montier's work has much more in it that is enduring. The Sacraments are a *sine qua non*, they are the rock on which the foundation is laid, and the house that is built on such a firm rock can stand the temptations and buffetings of the world, even when that world is the anti-clerical French government, and further it was built up in a more gradual, enduring and quieter way. It did not require a holocaust like the Great War to bring it forth. The Philippins of Rouen anticipated Talbot House by about five and twenty years and they have not sought to advertise themselves a great deal outside their own city, but doubtless the same ideals are cultivated in other branches of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in other towns of France.

St. Philip Neri! Pippo Bueno! Why is it that this saint, so peculiarly the saint of boys' clubs, scouts and lads' brigades is practically unknown in-

side the Anglican Communion? A group of Anglican journalists not long ago discovered St. Francis de Sales. When will the Catholic scoutmasters discover that they will be abundantly blessed when they have banded themselves together under the protection of the good Philip who gave up his whole existence to promoting the kingdom of God among young men? Have our brigade officers no imagination? Do not they want to put their young charges under a protector or are they content still to call themselves by some banal title stinking of officialdom and moderation like the curate who advertises himself as having no extremes and is merely good with men and lads?

Monsieur Montier has written the story of the Philippins in a book of rare charm, *Les Essaims Nouveaux*, published by the great house of Plon-nourrit. It is most unfortunate that it is now out of print and only occasionally can a copy be picked up second hand, as it is a work that all who have to do with the adolescent might read with great profit; in fact, it might quite well be translated. It is written in the first person and purports to be the experience of an adolescent working lad, Toussaint Formose, the typical product of a Rouen slum. His father is a drunkard, his brother a hostile unbeliever; he has received his first Communion, but mechanically and with little faith. There comes into his life this wonderful society. Like many a lad of that class he is attracted, then drops off. Then one day he comes across Monsieur Montier in the law courts; young Toussaint was a junior clerk in a solicitor's office, engaged in the not very wholesome occupation of copying out the evidence in divorce cases. Monsieur Montier is arranging the lease of the new quarters of the Philippins in the Rue St. Romain. Toussaint is brought back to the society and takes part in the famous exodus, carrying furniture, "two flower-pots, some chairs and a box of dominoes," which, boy-

like, he drops all over the street. Finally, through many temptations, particularly in regard to a not very wholesome love-affair, in which Monsieur Montier's great psychological instinct and knowledge of how to help young men in their temptations is shown, he arrives at becoming an out-and-out Philippin, and he gives a wonderful description of the gymnastics, the servers, the amateur theatricals, the work among the poor. Little by little we see how the lad's character develops.

It may seem somewhat astonishing to English people, but any kind of club or association whose members exceed twenty in number cannot exist in France without permission of the authorities; there is a kind of Latin suspicion of all associations. Thus the average Anglican vicar would feel somewhat surprised if he had to go to the police to form a branch of the C.E.M.S., a boy scout troop or a study circle, if there were more than twenty members. It can be quite easily seen that an anti-clerical prefect might find an excuse to veto such a society. As it was, at the time of the anti-clerical legislation violent attacks were made upon Catholic *patronages*, there would be complaints that the *patronage* was a device whereby the priest could entrap young children when they came out of the undenominational school. In fact, lay *patronages* were formed to look after children's morals without giving them religion and to take them away to *Colonies des Vacances*. Monsieur Montier is avowedly out to get hold of lads who have been brought up in the anti-Christian schools and bring them to the Faith. But he strenuously denies the charge spread about by the enemies of the Catholic religion that to be a Catholic means that a man cannot be a good republican. Monsieur Montier is a thorough democrat and republican, and a supporter of government, and law and order. Toussaint Formose, persuaded by his anti-religious brother, reads a book on the

idéal laïque. He finds that it closely resembles the Catholic ideal, but it is utterly devoid of any means of grace to carry it out. It takes no account of temptation. It is cold and sets a man an ideal, good enough it may be, but rather difficult to attain without the Bread of Life. Toussaint goes back to the Philippins. Monsieur Montier and the chaplain are human, they understand his temptations and difficulties.

A somewhat remarkable feature of this great work is that it is extra-parochial and yet it has not clashed with the work of the parishes. If such a society were started in an Anglican deanery there would be an outcry immediately from all the clergy that it would take the lads away from the parish churches. It is doubtful whether a bishop would license a private chapel. Nevertheless, if only some clergy would see it, it is a mistake to rely too much upon parochialism. If the boys were not in their own chapel, it would probably mean not that they were in their parish churches, but roaming about the streets. If only some man with a vision would start such a society, independent of a parish church, it might be possible to build up a great English Catholic lads' organisation that would solve this vast problem, how to bring the working lad to Mass. Our fitful men's organisations never seem to get very far or do very much, and depend very largely upon the personality of the particular curate that is in charge of them. Monsieur Montier considers his work really upon the same plane as a school with its private chapel and chaplain. In actual practice the building in the Rue St. Romain is not in a parish, but on the territory of the Cathedral, which means that it can enjoy special rights and privileges without difficulty, especially as the cathedral authorities are very friendly.

The work is organised upon an extremely democratic basis. With the boys from the poorer quarters are intermingled quite a large number from the

middle classes. There is, as in Toc H., a remarkable spirit of friendliness and camaraderie. Probably in a really democratic country like France this comes more naturally than in England, where class distinctions, even in post-war days, are sufficiently marked as to make the Toc H. ideal of mixing the classes peculiar and distinctive.

One of Monsieur Montier's principal ideals is that it is possible to be both a good Catholic and a good Republican. He has gone out of his way to show it to the rest of the French Catholic world. Rather naturally on account of the persecutions there has arisen a great gulf between Catholics and non-Catholics. Some Catholic *patronages* will have nothing to do with lay organisations. For instance there was a reunion of various Catholic *patronages* in the vicinity of Rouen. Only two of them, of which the Philippins were one, bore the insignia of adherence to the Federation of French Gymnastic Societies, an official organisation. Monsieur Montier has always been anxious that his Philippins should never show animosity to the Republic. An abbé and a layman, happening to notice this queried its wisdom.

The layman said: "I don't understand how a Catholic *patronage* can form part of an official organisation: on the contrary we ought to bring up all our forces in opposition."

"But we are not on principle in opposition."

"But surely you are not for the dirty Republic?"

"For the dirty Republic, no; for the Republic yes."

Here the priest intervened: "For my part I can understand that a man can be both a good Catholic and Republican, and if my *patronage* does not form part of an official union, these are the reasons. Firstly, I never thought we should be admitted. Secondly, I should be frightened of dangers for our lads; the competitions usually end in horse-play."

As a matter of fact the Philippins have shown a

very good example at these competitions. It is usual in France to hold such competitions on a Sunday, the weekly holiday, starting quite early. The Philippins would be up long before the other, perhaps at five o'clock to hear Mass before the competition started. Then they would march proudly into the arena, displaying their banner of St. Philip Neri. And after a hard day's work they would be back in their chapel for Vespers and Benediction.

And here it is, as is always in a movement of this sort, that the great strength of the Philippins lies. Monsieur Montier's personal example is so magnificent. Born to look after his men, "my brother" as he is called, he understands all their vices and temptations and difficulties. Particularly is this the case when the adolescent starts to "walk out." Toussaint falls in love, or thinks he does, with the young lady in the florist's, but he is admonished: "If you really love her, you will not try to bring unhappiness upon her by seducing her. Your conception of Love is pagan. Have an Immaculate Conception of Love. The Blessed Virgin is denoted as the Immaculate Conception; a conception is a thought, an ideal. The Blessed Virgin was the Ideal Woman conceived and realised by God. In the manner in which we can conceive ourselves, let us have an immaculate conception of woman."

When Toussaint is won to our Lord through the Philippins he becomes a great gymnast, secretary of a study circle, and when he is called up with his class to the colours he becomes a good soldier and rises to the rank of sergeant. The night before his departure into the army a little service is held in the club rooms. When he went into the barrack room the first night, his Philippins' training gave him sufficient courage to kneel down and say his prayers. One of his comrades said: "Hullo, I didn't know you were a seminarist."

"I am not a seminarist."

"Then why did you say your prayers?"

A seminarist was evidently understood, but an ordinary layman who said his prayers was considered something of a phenomenon.

A very fine work that the Philippins do is the work known as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; it is really a sub-section of the Philippins who devote themselves to work among the poor in the slums. It is considered so important that when the Philippins held their jubilee in 1919, it was given first place; the poor connected to them by this work were entertained before anyone else. "You deserved," said the abbé Prevost in his address, "to be put first in our festivities not only because by your sufferings are you a living image of Christ among us, but also because you bring the grace of heaven upon us. He hath filled the hungry with good things." Many of the Philippins are not very rich, and some are drawn from the working classes, but one and all delight in helping people poorer than themselves. There are some delightful and touching stories about the poor of Rouen, who doubtless share many of the simple virtues of the poor of London and other great cities. Monsieur Deschamps gave a hen to a poor couple to kill for the Epiphany, but they preferred to keep it as a remembrance of Philippin generosity. This was more generous than sanitary (the hen lived in the couple's one room), and the poor old woman gave every egg it laid back to the Philippins! While her husband having received as a remembrance the wedding ring of a friend killed in the Franco-Prussian War would never pawn it, however grave the temptation in time of stress, but would always keep it by him.

Another feature of the Philippin work in this connection is a system of prefects, the young men looking after the boys some ten years their junior. Young Toussaint growing up would have a youngster from a poor family to look after and to see that he

performed his duties both in chapel and in the club. Monsieur Montier has rather English ideas in this respect and has invariably gone out of his way to teach his young charges ideas of responsibility and not leave it all to the clergy. This is indeed excellent.

There is, as might be expected in a work of this sort, a Colonie des Vacances to which the youngsters can go in the summer months at various spots on the Norman coast. There is also another very interesting side of the work, known as the *Foyer*. Though the movement is essentially out to attract young men, and married men are not admitted once they are married, the problem of courtship and love has always been very much in the minds of Monsieur Montier and his friends. They quite see that it is part of the Church's duty not to lose young men because they become engaged or married, and also, that young men should be helped in finding the right sort of girl; further, there is no real necessity that a Philippin who marries should be lost for ever to the cause. So the *Foyer* was founded. To its reunions the Philippins were encouraged to bring their wives and their sweethearts, a Philippin can be married, as far as the religious ceremony is concerned, in the Philippins' private chapel, with the Philippins in gymnast's uniform forming a guard of honour, and when a new little Philippin comes into the world, his mother receives a *layette* and other presents from her husband's friends, as well, doubtless, as much help and good advice from Madame Montier who, we may well be sure, has a great deal to do with this side of the work.

And what is the atmosphere of the followers of St. Philip Neri? The best answer to that is to go into their chapel and club rooms on a Sunday morning for the family *Missa Cantata*. The service is very unlike that found usually in France and it has been noted by French priests. The Mass is largely

audible and the singing is congregational. It is not a Mass said by a priest before a number of young men who follow it as dumb spectators and who may be indifferent as to what is going on at the altar. There is on the other hand a participation by the congregation in the responses made with the priest or by the reading in a loud voice in French of certain parts of the service. Further, Communions are made at this Mass, which really resembles the Parochial Sung Masses at nine o'clock or thereabouts which priests from time to time have attempted in Anglo-Catholic churches. There is a wonderful union of souls to our Blessed Lord through the Sacrament of the Altar which this Mass makes most effective.

Further, the hymns are largely the Philippins' own, written by Monsieur Montier, and sung with great heartiness; of these the most well-known is the Exodus written to commemorate the emigration to the Rue St. Romain quarters. And what a fine array do the servers make with their cassocks of all colours of the rainbow. But this is not entirely the reason of the gorgeous cassocks. The Frenchman is really splendidly practical, and it is a good thing for the thurifer to wear lilac, the master of ceremonies blue, the servers red, and the acolytes green. Each has his own job and is distinguished.

And after the Mass *petit déjeuner* in common downstairs concludes the Agape. What a splendid time, the shouts of laughter, the games, the Christian fellowship. If we have devoted a whole chapter to this one society at the expense of many others in the French Church, at the same time it holds a unique position which it will not lightly lose. It must not be supposed that Monsieur Montier has invariably had an easy time with his fellow Catholics, some of whom have been sufficiently narrow-minded to attack him for his theories. He has gone on contentedly putting them into practice and stands up

against rival criticism. The work inaugurated by the two men at the great Calvary of Trouville goes on from strength to strength, conquering and to conquer, and is daily adding much people to the Lord among the young men of Rouen.

" Ton patronage,
O bon Pippo,
Portera d'âge en âge
Très haut ton fier drapeau.

" Sois notre guide! Après toi qu'on nous voie
Marcher vers Dieu d'un pas ferme et vainqueur.
Sois notre Maitre! Enseigne-nous la voie;
Sois notre Ami! Partage-nous ton coeur!

" Nous unirons pour fournir la carrière
Et demeurer catholique français
Le drapeau saint à la sainte bannière
Et nous irons de la lutte au succès.

" O Saint Patron de nos jeunes recrues,
Augmente encore tes féaux ici-bas;
Ravive en nous les fiertés disparues:
Protége-nous dans les divers combats.

" Et si l'instant des batailles approche,
Qu'on nous retrouve en tout temps, en tout lieu,
Français sans peur et Chrétiens sans reproches,
Digne de toi, de la France et de Dieu!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

BECAUSE the Vatican may have condemned Socialism it does not follow in the least that members of the Roman Church are obliged to adhere to the Conservative party as an article of Faith. It could not be very well expected, however, that French Catholics could vote radical or socialist at the elections when it is remembered how these parties have treated the Church. But there is a very strong feeling, especially among the younger men, that there is a Christian standard in matters concerning Capital and Labour, and that though our Lord refused to act as judge when the man asked Him to settle the dispute between his brother and himself concerning the inheritance, nevertheless the Divine Founder of Christianity could not tolerate injustice and oppression. What then do French Catholics hold as to the relationship between masters and men? Perhaps the answer is best supplied by a story.

Most of my readers have probably been to Switzerland some time in their lives, and they may know the route to that country which takes them to it by Belfort and Delle. Not a dozen miles to the West of the railway running between those two places, lies the Pays de Montbeliard. This district centering round the pleasant little town of the same name has had a most curious religious history. The private property of the Duke of Wurtemburg up till the end of the eighteenth century it only became incorporated into France after Napoleon's fall. The Dukes of Wurtemburg were Protestant. So the German doctrine of *Cujus Regio, Ejus Religio* was applied with iron German thoroughness, and Catholic

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churches were forbidden to be set up, and willy-nilly the people of Montbeliard and the surrounding villages were Protestants because they had to be.

This has naturally had a profound effect upon the religion of the inhabitants up till this day. Of course, since 1815 numbers of Catholics have come into the district from elsewhere and mixed with the original inhabitants. These immigrants are mainly of the working class, and thus it comes that Protestantism is strong among the wealthy owners of factories and comfortable middle-class shopkeepers while the Catholic Faith is strongest among the workmen who have come in from outside. But recently another factor has come into the district, free-thinking which has degenerated into Communism, and this force is a power to be reckoned with.

This is especially the case in Audincourt, a particularly ugly industrial village three miles from Montbeliard. The parish priest of this unlovely spot for a number of years has been the abbé Jacquot. He is of the stuff of which our own English Tractarians were made and would quite willingly go to prison for his Faith if it were necessary. Some fifteen years ago he was sued in the local court of first instance for civil damages by the relations of an atheist and notorious evil-liver as he would not give this man Christian burial. He was fined fifty francs in a trial that was disgraced by the partiality of the stipendiary magistrate who presided, this agnostic official coming down from the rostrum and yelling, " I could not be a Catholic and an honest man," as he shook his fist in the priest's face. On another occasion he was forbidden by the free-thinking mayor of Audincourt to hold a religious procession on some festival, but he took no notice. Brought into the local court he was condemned, but on appeal the verdict was reversed and the mayor had to eat humble pie. But his most remarkable action was during a strike which

took place at Audincourt in the summer of 1922. One of the principal factories at Audincourt is the factory of Peugeot, whose motor cars enjoy an international reputation. The directors of the firm are Protestant. The workmen on the other hand were largely under Communist influence. The immediate cause of the strike was a dispute between one of the workmen and a foreman as to the exact price that the former should be paid under a piece-work scale for a particular job he had done. But trouble had been brewing for some time and this was but a match to the flame. The strike lasted a month, but what would have happened if a peacemaker had not arrived in the person of the abbé Jacquot it would be difficult to say.

With singular modesty and in a most entertaining style he has written a little book about what he did *(Un curé dans une grève)*, published by the Editions Spes and with a preface by Monsieur Goyau. The really remarkable thing seems to have been that he, a Catholic priest, was trusted by the Protestant masters in preference to any of their own pastors, and he seems to have worked an equally good influence upon the men, most of whom were frankly anti-religious. He was able after a certain amount of persuasion to influence the men to return to work, and he was also able to induce the firm not to take too vindictive measures against the men, and also to remedy their just grievances. He further was singularly successful at seeing the humorous side to some of the incidents. For instance, there was a certain fomenter of trouble, Rollin by name. This man attempted to quote Holy Scripture in defence of the strikers. The abbé was sharp in his reply and talked sound Catholic theology instead of mildly agreeing in the same sort of way that many Anglican Christian Socialists might have done. "But Christ said that men must forgive their enemies, you forgive in the Confessional. Why don't they forgive us?" "Allow

me, dear friends," replied the abbé suavely, "to give you a little lesson in theology. That's what you lack, and the lack of it divides you. For instance, Rollin has just confessed to have done some wrong to a third party, taken away his reputation or his purse. In acknowledging the wrong, he tells me of the matter as he would tell a magistrate (that is Confession). Do I absolve him at once? No, that would be too easy; it is necessary that he undertakes to repair the injustice in re-establishing the person's reputation or restoring the purse, and he must repent sincerely. That is essential and it is called contrition. He must accept a salutary penance (dismissal, what?) which will be a reparation for his breaking of the law, and which will prevent him from doing it again. My friends, all that is necessary in the Confessional to receive Absolution. But you are a long way off that where M. Peugeot is concerned. Not only have you not repented, but you scarcely recognise that you are in the wrong. On his side he has put you into the street. If you were determined not to do it again, he would perhaps be quite glad to reinstate you. Would you do anything else if you were in his place?" As a commentary upon the behaviour of Rollin, the abbé Jacquot told the writer some four years after the strike (and there was a subtle twinkle in his eye as he said it) that the worthy striker who had quoted the scripture so glibly against his dismissal had nevertheless obtained a post as foreman in another factory, where he was most successful in lauding it over others, so there was a great deal of knowledge in human nature in Monsieur Jacquot's last question.

Certainly such a priest both loved his flock and was well trained in Christian ethics and theology. Somehow his action as peacemaker did not please everybody. The more extreme Communists carried round a banner on which was described Monsieur Jacquot smoking an old pipe and by the side of him

a German officer: between them was the legend, *Vive la Sociale, à bas la Calotte.* This was captured by some friends of the vicar and he retains it till this day as one of his proudest possessions. A Parisian Communist paper which had come to grief through lack of support heard of the affair and came out with a leading article in its last issue, which began, *Jacquot n'est pas un singe, mais un curé.* (Jacquot is not a monkey, but a parson!) The local Protestant press was at first jubilant when the strike showed signs of ending, but when it heard who it was that was bringing it to an end, suddenly became strangely silent. This was taken up by a Catholic journal which printed an article with the title, *Silence! Il y a un curé!*

The good M. Jacquot has a profound love of souls and the real understanding of his people, many of whom are very poor. His heart bleeds for them. Not long ago talking of conditions in the parish, he spoke of the wretched wage many of the workmen get and instanced a man with seven children who was earning the princely sum of a hundred francs a week, "How could his wife possibly make ends meet?" And he further remarked, "And what would happen if Providence were to send them another child?" Many Anglicans might quite legitimately take the view that an eighth child to this already impoverished family would be quite improper. The subject of the limitation of families is discussed in another chapter, but this is mentioned here to show that the French Catholic is no upholder of the Malthusian doctrine, which in reality is a counsel of despair, that to obtain a maximum of wealth for the people, there must be a minimum of population. That would be out of the question. But Monsieur Jacquot does not uphold the modern Capitalist system as a paragon of all that is good, and he is anxious to evolve a social system based upon sound Catholic fundamentals that will provide a

decent standard of comfort for all and at the same time allow France to be repopulated.

In this connection he is a great upholder of what are known as the *Syndicats chrétiens* or Christian Trades' Unions. These are a most interesting experiment. For instance, the bishops of the dioceses of Normandy a few years ago issued a most striking statement:—

"We bishops preoccupied in promoting a Christian social order are encouraging priests and laymen to found Catholic Professional Unions. We ask them also to favour the foundation of Christian Trades' Unions upon the basis of principles of Christian morality and pontifical direction. The priests will act as theological advisers, they will lend their moral weight, but they will never take part in social conflict and in discussions of things of a purely technical nature.

"We bishops further hope that by permanent agreements employers and employed, masters and men, by means of arbitration, strengthened by a Catholic conscience, will understand the needs of their profession and the common interests of those that live by it. We see in the Christian Union Movement the sole means of industrial peace."

It must be remembered that as a whole the French Trade Union Movement, at least measured by the standards of the *Daily Herald*, is "backward." But what there has been of a socialist nature has been usually virulent. The word *Sabotage* is a French one and the practice has a French origin. It is part of the French character to do things *à outrance*. The Trade Union Movement as represented by an organism such as the C.G.T. *(Confédération Générale de Travail)* may have been small, but it was controlled by a determined body of men, who knew what they wanted and intended to have it. But it has been losing its popularity, particularly since the rather

disastrous (from the men's point of view) railway strike in 1920. But the initiation by the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons of the Christian Unions is a striking move towards better things. The principles are not those of Moscow and brute force, but of charity, mutual understanding and co-operation. The other unions jeer at them and say that they are the mere tools of the masters. The masters do not altogether like them and are inclined to fear both them and the Catholic hierarchy and clergy behind them. So these useful institutions have to tread the path of the *Via Media* and, like many institutions that have to tread this rather English and un-French path, do not always find it full of roses.

At the end of his book Monsieur Jacquot asks a pertinent question, "Will the working class follow the revolutionary unions still? Perhaps it will one day realise that it is dealing with scoundrels, with politicians who deceive, who live on it and use it as a stepping stone. Poor children! Poor people! Seigneur Jésus, vous les aimez. En retour, qu'ils vous aiment et qu'ils s'aiment! Adveniat Regnum Tuum!" And fired by love of our Lord, immediately the strike was over, he arranged for a mission to be held in his parish and invited the strikers and his other parishioners to come and hear the gospel.

Such is the way that the Church preaches the social gospel in France. It does not ally itself with any particular party, but by love her priests seek to make peace and ensue it and to set up a standard of social righteousness that is difficult to carry out in a land much impoverished by inroads into her population and a depreciation of her money. But the work is being done slowly and surely and is especially taken up by the younger men. One of M. Jacquot's *vicaires* was most successful with the young men of his *patronage*. Not only did he organise amateur theatricals and football among the Audincourt adolescents, but also study circles where they could

learn the social message and implications of the Gospel.

And this is the case of countless *patronages* in France. Monsieur Montier laughs at the idea of a *patronage* such as his being a kind of patronising boys' club where a few pious old ladies of conservative principles can dispense tea and buns. He was most eager that the lads should be instructed intellectually in Christian principles as applied to economic questions. And this is the case with all up-to-date *patronages*. Some years ago there was a movement known as the *Sillon*, which had a great following among the young men in France and was followed with much interest in England. It had the misfortune to be led by a certain M. Marc Saignier, an idealist, but with no practical bent whatsoever, and the result was that it was condemned by authority. A Parisian slum priest once said to the writer apropos M. Saignier that he was a " Bon enfant, mais gâté, et qui n'a jamais dû gagner sa vie." It was probably in the circumstances the wisest thing that this particular organisation should fall, but that does not in the least mean that all French Catholics are compelled to become Tories or even want to be. The keenness for a sane study of social problems exists as much as ever before, and undoubtedly the *Sillon* did great things in assisting to foster that keenness, but its usefulness over it is right that it should give way for something else. The success of the *Action Populaire*, described in another chapter, is quite sufficient evidence of that.

Undoubtedly, keenness about social questions in a particular parish depends very much upon the zeal of the particular priest in charge of it. But there are constant indications that such zeal is by no means uncommon. And many priests prove themselves to be uncommonly good business men and can use their abilities to the advantage of the Church and of their people. The original foundation of the *Ouest-Eclair*

in Rennes with very little backing proves the great genius of the abbé Trochu, who became its business manager.

"Don't you see man's body suffering? He is badly fed and badly clothed; he is crushed by too long hours of work, so that the flesh becomes a machine. Gentlemen, we must go to this suffering body. The physical condition of man has a lot to do with his moral condition, and it is working for men's souls to combat distress and hunger. It behoves that an intelligent Christian should not let himself be outstripped by anyone in the practical application of social science. We ought not to allow, we Christians, that anyone in the world should speak better than ourselves on the questions that are concerning the intelligence of this century. The gospel has more need than anyone to raise questions of poverty, labour, the family, trades' unions, savings' banks, alms-houses, crèches, the work of women and children, questions of the greatest importance which concern the very foundations of human society." Thus spoke the abbé Perreyve at the Sorbonne as long ago as 1875.

So it will be easily seen that the Church in France is by no means ignorant of its duties as a corporate body in addition to its duties to individual souls. And it is indeed remarkable what certain individual priests have done in their own parishes. M. Goyau, the literary giant of the movement, has described vividly the story of the priest of La Vieille-Loye in the Jura. For 47 years during the nineteenth century this parish was served by a priest who stayed there too long. Worn out by age and by the indifference of the people he died of a broken heart. In 1890 a new incumbent was appointed. He found a parish without anyone who went to church with the exception of a few old women, with a half-ruined edifice, and scarcely any revenue. The people of the parish were not actively hostile, they were what is a great

deal worse, merely apathetic. The village was scattered and the men worked in shifts at the glass factory, a day shift and a night shift. There was no corporate life nor feeling; it was difficult ever to get the whole village to come together.

But the new parson was not lacking in ideas. He found the local grocers' shops to be extremely dear, there was an agreement to keep up the prices, but the worthy man started a co-operative grocers' store at the Presbytery. Naturally the tradesmen attempted to cover this brave attempt with ridicule, but as the new grocer's was a great deal cheaper, it began to attract custom. Eventually, it became so popular that the competing grocers had to reduce their prices, and the net result of the affair was that prices dropped a third in La Vieille-Loye.

A development of the co-operative society extended to a medical club. The good curé arranged with a doctor in Dôle to visit the village once a fortnight for a fee of ten francs. It was given out that any inhabitant of the village by subscribing only 50 centimes a year could join the medical club. About 300 villagers joined. Each member could consult the doctor at the Presbytery for 25 centimes or by paying a franc he would see the patients in their own homes. Members also had the right to ask the doctor to visit them from Dôle at any time for 10 francs a visit, instead of the usual 15, while if the member of the medical club was also a member of the co-operative, he could get his medical visit at an even further reduced rate, the co-operative society paying the difference. Similar reduced prices were charged for drugs, the chemist allowing members of the club certain discounts.

Another activity of the priest was to start a communal mid-day meal for the children of the elementary school who lived at a distance, and for only 15 centimes he provided them with an excellent dinner. Incidentally by all these activities he was

brought constantly into touch with his parishioners and got to know them all better.

The result has been that the good-will engendered by the co-operative society and the medical club has brought the whole parish round their devoted priest, and a spirit of willingness and co-operation has emerged from it. The good man taught his parishioners that they formed a community and that the parish does not live for them, but by them. The big girls teach the younger ones their Catechism and the younger ones teach the infants, and even the quite little girls take it in turns to come on Saturdays and help clean up the church. A vacant floor at the top of the co-operative was turned into an almshouse for the old people. And it was said that five years after the curé had been inducted into this parish, which appeared so unfruitful, thirty men, three quarters of the women and all the adolescents made their Easter Communions.

Montligeon, a village in Normandy, also through the action of its priest, undertook a special social work. It consisted of 630 inhabitants who were very average sort of Christians. It had had several village industries which towards the close of the last century began to decline on account of the competition of machine-made goods in the towns, and there was much distress. Then the abbé Buguet, the parish priest, had a brilliant idea, namely, to work in conjunction a society for praying for the repose of the souls of the dead, and a printing works where the necessary printing of this society could be done.

The success was phenomenal. What started in an obscure village spread throughout France and outside the frontiers of France. In twelve years the society had over 6,000,000 associates. The printing works was the means of bringing this phenomenal result about. Originally the priest himself and a server set up the type. They printed little propaganda leaflets and a little magazine of four

pages. These efforts were gradually sent all over the world and translations were asked for. The founder himself was unable to understand his success. The printing works which began in such a humble way gave employment to over a hundred men from the village. And so this village which had been all but dead, had been raised to life again through its work of intercession for the dead, and the leaflets and magazines which were printed there brought countless moments of joy and comfort to bereaved Catholics throughout the world, and at the same time won over a whole village to the Catholic Faith.

Certainly French priests do not lack intelligence nor powers of organisation nor initiative in applying the Faith to everyday life, and doubtless there are scores of parishes throughout France which owe much to the work of individual priests of this stamp. The clergy in France are certainly alive to what is going on around them, a recent number of the *Catholic Annual* gives two chapters of technical advice to the parish priest, " M. le curé installe le Cinema," and " M. le curé installe la telephone sans fil."

It would be impossible to write anything about the study of social problems in France without mentioning the *Semaines Sociales* which have been held annually nearly every August since 1904. From the fact that they are held annually, they may be compared to the Anglican Church Congresses, but they are really more akin to C.O.P.E.C. in their aims. But when we compare them with the latter we are forced, however reluctantly, to admit that there is no-one quite so impractical as the practical Englishman. When the originators of the great C.O.P.E.C. Conference at Birmingham planned their programme in 1924, they included every conceivable subject. Considering that the Conference met for about a week it would be rather difficult to say how they hoped to obtain an adequate discussion, and indeed one Church newspaper made bold to describe

it some time before it actually took place when it had merely got to the stage of appealing for funds as " The Millennium for £3,000."

Perhaps it would not be altogether inapposite to suggest that the C.O.P.E.C. Committee might have done well to study the system of the so-called " Social Weeks " where the Frenchman prefers, rather sensibly we think, to study one subject at one time.

The *Semaines Sociales* are a wonderful example of how a week may be profitably spent in conference upon a religious subject. The first was held at Lyons in 1904. Others have been held at Bordeaux, in 1909, when " Labour Legislation " was the subject for discussion. At Rouen, in 1910, " The Application of the Social Laws " was the theme. At Limoges, in 1912, it was " The Family "; at Versailles, in 1913, " The Idea of Responsibility." Metz was the scene of the first post-war conference, the subject being, " Catholicism in its Social Aspect," while since this conference annual congresses have been held, that at Caen, in 1920, discussing " Production "; that at Toulouse, in 1921, " The Injustice of Money-lending "; that of 1922, " The State and Economic Life "; and that at Grenoble, in 1923, " The Problem of the Decline of Population," to which a special chapter is devoted. The most recent conference, in 1927, was held at Nancy and was extremely up-to-date, namely, " The Place of Woman in Society," while the previous year it was held at Le Havre, and the subject of " International Peace " was discussed.

It is interesting to note the date of the first conference, namely, 1904. That is to say it was held just at the time when the radicals were busily engaged in despoiling the Church, the Church was able to prove that she was just as keenly interested in the lot of the poorer classes as the most advanced radical, and, further, that she was infinitely com-

petent to do it. And so these congresses have gone on annually since that date, except for the five war years, and many pertinent questions have been asked by capable priests and laymen. Further, a verbatim report of the conferences is published, so that thousands who are unable to be present can nevertheless come under the influence of the speakers. Certainly these conferences are among the most hopeful features of the French Church. That on the Problem of Population, in 1923, was of peculiar interest and it is dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROBLEM OF THE POPULATION.

"Je vois ma femme près de moi et je vois mon enfant
clair et triomphant,
Qui donne de grands coups de pied à son berceau,
Et qui rit aux éclats dans le soleil levant."

IT is fitting and proper that Claudel in his great ode that sets out with the Mass and a meditation on the right way of receiving the Blessed Sacrament should conclude in a note of triumph on the family life and the blessing of children. For the Catholic Church is the guardian of the Christian home and of the family, and no essay on the French Church would be complete without some mention of the greatest problem that France has to face to-day, the decline in population.

Of course, this problem is not one peculiar to France. It is a phenomenon which is manifesting itself all over Europe. We have to face it in England, and so far the Anglican clergy, with the exception of modernists such as the Bishop of Birmingham who take the anti-Catholic view, have been strangely silent. But it should be impossible to hesitate before the question if we remember that the Catholic Church thinks of marriage as a sacrament, and to use the words of the Bishop of Ochrida at the World Conference of Faith and Order, "The Sacrament of Marriage means the increase of the Church." But those who advocate so warmly artificial restriction of families might study what has happened in France, where the practice of birth-control first began.

An examination of population statistics of the past hundred years is illuminating. In 1821 the number

of births in France for every thousand of the population was 31·7. A little less than a hundred years later at the outbreak of the Great War it had dropped to 18. Happily after the war it had increased a little over one point, to 19·3 in 1922. In the same year in Great Britain the figure stood at 22·6, in the German *Reich* at 23·6, in Italy at 31·8. Again in post-war Europe, where the excess of births over deaths in France was 70,000, it was 335,000 in our own country and 500,000 in Germany. At the fall of Napoleon France was the most thickly populated country in Europe, having 20,000,000 inhabitants, over half what it has to-day. Great Britain was far behind with 11,970,120. To-day we have surpassed France who had 39,209,666 in 1921, the census figures of Great Britain that year showing 42,767,739.

Turning to the figures of individual French departments we find very few increases in those that are purely rural. But where a rural department has increased it is invariably one where the Catholic Faith is strong. Thus in Brittany the two departments of Finisterre and Morbihan showed a considerable increase during the latter part of the nineteenth century where decrease was the rule elsewhere. Another Catholic department, the Vosges, also shows a credit balance.

	1886.	1896.	1906.
Finisterre	707,820	739,648	795,103
Morbihan	535,256	552,028	573,152
Vosges	413,707	421,412	429,812

On the other hand take a typical anti-clerical department as the Nièvre where the population declined during those years.

Nièvre	347,645	333,899	313,972

It might be interesting to look at the total figures for France during those years.

38,218,903	38,517,975	39,252,245

Then let us compare these figures with England and Wales for the three census years of 1881, 1891 and 1901. In the first the population was 25,974,439, in 1891 it was 29,002,525, and in the first year of this century it surpassed the thirty million figure and reached 32,527,843. The German figures, too, may be illuminating. Although the total area of the *Reich* is considerably less than that of France, its population in 1925 was 62,568,753. These figures are for post-war Germany, of course, which has lost much of its population through the Treaty of Versailles. The steady increase of the population of the German Empire may be seen from the figures of four pre-war years, 1871 — 41,058,792; 1875 — 42,727,360; 1900—56,367,178; 1905—60,641,278.

If we bear in mind the fact that pre-war France and Germany had almost an equal area the preponderance of Germans over Frenchmen is striking. Perhaps it was not altogether without reason that the Germans thought France a dying nation whom they could crush as a steam roller crushes the stones in a road, and there has been a speculation in France that if families had been larger and the population consequently larger, Germany might have had a more wholesome respect for France, and therefore on the *Si pacem vis, para bellum* argument there might have been no Great War. Certainly there has arisen a tremendous alarm among French people, agnostics as well as Catholics, at this decline. In the Northern districts, especially those devastated by the war, the lack of labour has at times been so great that Belgians have been able to pour across the frontier and earn high wages. In the same way across the Riviera frontier come quantities of Italians, and the French government is becoming seriously alarmed at the numbers of foreigners within its borders. Many people are quite convinced that the attitude of the French in the occupied areas of Germany and the Ruhr expedition was largely due to the fear of a thinly

populated country for a thickly populated one. But of course far and away above politics and economics stand the golden laws of the Catholic Church.

As we have said the tendency among all European countries has been towards a fall in the birth-rate quite recently, but this tendency began in France during the nineteenth century when other countries were increasing, and the result is that France can show the worst figures of any country. The common theory is that it was originally due to the enactments of the *Code Napoléon* upon the subject of inheritance. It is against the French temperament to allow large estates to accumulate, and to prevent this the Code refused to allow a father to bequeath his property intact to his eldest son. It had to be divided up in proportion among the children. But many small proprietors preferred to leave their property intact and they could only do this if there were one child. It has even been said in proof of this that should the one child die, another often appeared upon the scene nine months afterwards, so anxious are most French couples to have one child to whom to pass on the inheritance, but not more than one.

Yet it is interesting to note that Monsieur Martin Saint-Leon in his paper, *La Crise de la Natalité: Ses Causes, le Droit Individualiste,* read at the *Semaine Sociale* at Grenoble in 1923, challenged this widely accepted theory. He pointed out that the liberty of making a will freely, as is the custom in our own country, was never the case in France, not even before the Revolution and the Code, and that therefore the Code did not do very much to change French law, and he further pointed out that in Belgium, whose law is largely modelled on the Napoleonic Code, the population has been increasing. He rather attributed the decline, if it can be attributed to French law, to the divorce laws of the last fifty years, which have set up a low standard of morality between husband and wife.

But whatever the first cause, it has undoubtedly spread throughout the country for the same sort of reasons that it has spread in other countries. And it is quite easy and rational to attribute the reason to the great wave of anti-Catholicism that swept France during the last century. The sort of atmosphere of *La culte de moi,* which Monsieur Bourget has so ably attacked, was largely responsible for it.

It is no wonder then that the Committee responsible for the organisation of the *Semaines Sociales* decided to choose the decline in population as the subject for the Conference held at Grenoble in 1923. A *compte-rendu* was published after the Conference, which is well worthy of study both on account of the light it throws upon the population problem and the attitude of the Church towards it, and also for the light it throws upon the conduct of the congresses known as *Semaines Sociales*. There were more than twenty papers read or lectures given, and these were some of the subjects discussed: Monseigneur Julien, Bishop of Arras, read a paper upon the Theory of the State and how far it ought to interfere in the question. Monseigneur Baudrillart spoke upon the part the school should play in the building up again of the family life. The causes of the crisis in the birth-rate were examined by three professors, who looked at the matter each from his own special view point, legal, economic and moral. The abbé Danset drew attention to the lack of labour in France and the consequent need for the importation of foreigners, and the medical point of view was ably and sympathetically stated by Doctor Biot. To English churchmen, however, by far the most interesting paper was that of Monseigneur Lavallè who dealt with the question of clerical celibacy, and laid down the axiom that in those parts of France where the Catholic Church is strongest and where there are the greatest number of religious orders vowed to a life of chastity, there you

find the greatest height of sexual morality, the least number of divorces and the largest families.

But it must not be thought for the moment (as we have sometimes seen it stated) that the Catholic Church is pledged to a wanton and indiscriminate reproduction of the human race without forethought on the part of the parents. The falsity of this was made clear again and again throughout the sessions. Indeed Monseigneur Julien spoke most sympathetically of those parents who limited their families. "One of the reasons for the restriction of families is the difficulty that families of modest means have of giving their children an adequate education. A weakness, someone will say, but an honourable weakness, which has as its aim a praiseworthy ideal, that of bringing up the son to be as good as his father. Don't let us grumble at this too much. It is by such means that the movement towards social betterment works. Where then could the State place its educational scholarships better to promote the intellectual advancement of the people than in awarding them to large families who, for the very reason that they are large, deserve well of their country?"

As a matter of fact the Church has been up against two heresies, not only that of the minimalists, but also the heresy of the maximalists. The former class is that of those who quite openly have carried on the usual birth-control propaganda in favour of the limitation of families. But now that things are getting desperate, there has arisen another class which says that France must be repopulated at any price. Births must be encouraged however they would come. Even illegitimate births must be rewarded, and these materialists would, in the words of Mr. Bernard Shaw's revolutionary, shout a pæan of praise to every little unfortunate born into this world through lust, "Unto us a son is born, unto us a child is given." But as Monsieur Duthoit pointed out at the Conference it

is families with all that family means, not individuals, who are going to save France.

It would be quite impossible in a limited space to go into details concerning this Congress. The report of the sessions is one that repays careful study. Many of the papers dealt with political and legal aspects of the question and many of these aspects are peculiar to French political and legal life. But it should be noted that more than one word of warning was sounded against the tendency of offering subsidies and rewards to too great an extent to the parents of large families. The caducary laws did not save Rome when she was threatened with an extinction of her population. Anyone who has travelled to any extent upon French railways will have noticed the large number of people who seem to carry a special privilege ticket, entitling them to travel at a reduced rate, because they are members of a *famille nombreuse*. The companies are subsidised by the government for the granting of these concessions and the English nation has always rightly distrusted State subsidies. How far they encourage parents to increase their offspring, it would be difficult to say; probably not very much.

No, the matter is a moral and religious one. It will not be solved by prizes at baby shows, nor cheap train fares. As every speaker at the Conference agreed, the French people must get back to its religion. And we cannot refrain from saying that the outspoken courage of the French clergy is beyond all praise. We wish that the English clergy would study the problem a little closer and be a little more outspoken. It cannot be gainsaid that the middle classes in England are fast dying out. Families with more than three children are becoming extremely rare, whereas one or two children or even no children at all is becoming the average in most London suburbs. Alas, that the English clergy have shirked the issue, and this is a subject which

now-a-days seems to be severely left alone in the pulpit, except when some modernist dignitary lifts up his voice about the large families and the overcrowded dwellings in the slums. But this is quite begging the question, and as an attempt to solve the social problem birth control is a counsel of despair. Pull down your slums and let landlords be at least Christian and welcome families with children instead of driving them away. As one of the speakers at Grenoble instanced, it was almost impossible for many a Frenchman to find a lodging for his family if he had children.

In one of the papers suggestions were made that a family with children might be honoured, not necessarily rewarded. For instance, *La Croix* has recently been publishing photographs of *Les belles familles de la France*, and it was much applauded at the Conference that when a Lyons father brought his eleventh child for Baptism, although the man was in quite a humble position, the Cardinal Archbishop himself came down to perform the ceremony, which on this occasion was not given over to the junior curate. Probably if every family in France did its duty it would not be left to just a few to have such very large families that must on some women, at any rate, be an undue burden. But as things are in France it would appear to be a patriotic and Christian duty. In England it may not be so necessary as yet, but if things go on as they are going on at present we may find ourselves in the position that France is in to-day, and the latest English birth-rate statistics have been very discouraging.

The only hope for the increase of France is that the religious revival should be lasting and that it should bear practical fruit. A French bishop once spoke to the writer about a certain mutual acquaintance, a literary man engaged on a Paris daily paper, where he occupied a high position. "G—— is a practising Catholic. He not only goes to church, he

carries out his beliefs into his daily life. He is not like many Catholics who do not always do what they profess. He is the father of eight children. He does not merely content himself with exhorting his neighbours to have children."

Some of the more enlightened free-thinkers are beginning to realise that they must practise the same ideal as the Catholics. Mr. Dennis Gwynn in his admirable work on the Catholic Reaction in France has given an interesting account of the settlement of peasants from Catholic and "backward" Brittany in the "progressive" district of the Garonne, which has carried on the art of "progress" to such a fine pitch that there is scarcely any population left at all. How this scheme will eventually answer it would be difficult to say; the transference of a people *en bloc* is not an easy matter; but it is significant of the state of things that such an experiment has to be made at all.

For this problem is among the greatest problems of the age, and whether Catholics will deal with it on right lines in practice as well as in theory will be measured the influence of the Catholic Church as a moral force in the world of to-day. The success or failure of the Catholic movement in the Anglican Church will not depend upon the extent to which it can persuade cautious bishops to sanction extra-liturgical devotions to the Blessed Sacrament (and it must always be remembered that the Blessed Sacrament is a means, not an end), but how far Catholics will use the means of grace to enable them to practise self-control and self-denial. When we hear of Anglo-Catholics married with a nuptial mass and then thinking it no shame nor sin to use contraceptives, our heart is moved to great sorrow and to a wish that the authorities of the movement would face the facts more courageously, and openly rebuke such immorality.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY.

THE war certainly added enormously to the prestige of the French clergy. All ecclesiastics of military age and physical fitness were mobilised immediately with the rest of their compatriots. In all over 32,000 of the French clergy were mobilised, and between 4,000 and 5,000 lost their lives. Of those who were thus mobilised as many as 9,000 were members of religious orders. About half those mobilised were mentioned in despatches, 9,378 received the Croix de Guerre, nearly 900 the Legion of Honour, and 1,533 the Military Medal. But far and away the most important work done by these priests was not that of winning honour for themselves, but what they did in bringing the message of the gospel home to their comrades in the ranks.

Certainly, during the war the manhood of France, however much it had forsaken the Church before, was desirous of returning to its religious duties and to receive the sacraments. As an instance of how a regiment going off to the front wanted the ministrations of religion the following story will show. The garrison of Toul in Lorraine was mobilised on Saturday, August 1st, 1914. A certain regiment was expecting hourly to be sent up to meet the shock of the German advance in front of Metz. Officers and men were very anxious to have a chaplain with them. But the *aumonerie militaire* had not been then established. Was there a priest in the ranks? Someone said he believed that there was one among the ambulance men. Eventually, this man was found. He was a sergeant, by name Camille Bonet, but he had only been ordained deacon the previous Sunday. The

men were loth to depart without a priest with them. The coadjutor Bishop of Nancy, Monseigneur Ruch, was among the troops mobilised. After thinking the matter over and obtaining the necessary permission he ordained the abbé Bonet priest, at five o'clock on the Sunday morning, in the Hospital Chapel of St. Charles. His letters of orders were hurriedly written out over a half sheet of notepaper and within a few hours he was *en route* with his regiment for the front, his first Mass being said a few days later in the open air and his second some time after in a prisoners' camp near Dresden. For a year he was available for the spiritual needs of his fellow prisoners as well as for their material needs, being a hospital orderly. Finally, through the intervention of the Pope he was exchanged and repatriated and, being found unfit for further service on account of his health, he was appointed administrator (in Anglican parlance, Dean) of Toul Cathedral at the age of 27. Though a civilian now, his work among the troops continued, as Toul was one of the most important garrisons on the Lorraine front.

And there were countless other priests who gained distinction for their valour. From the same diocese, for instance, as M. Bonet, that of Nancy, many instances could be quoted. The abbé Populus of Virecourt was mobilised with the 20th group of the medical corps. He served on many sections of the Western front. While at Verdun, in 1917, he gained distinction in rescuing a wounded man under fire. A few months later he received the *Croix de Guerre*. Only a month after he had gained this award he made the supreme sacrifice and died asking that his wounded comrades might be attended to first. And it would be possible to quote many similar instances of bravery among the clergy who were mobilised.

Some of the priests served in the ranks as ordinary combatants but the majority of the clergy where it was possible preferred to be in the medical corps,

as they felt it would be more in keeping with their sacred calling. As a rule this attitude was respected and certainly they had as much opportunity of showing their courage here as if they had been fighting in the ranks of the combatants. But whatever course they followed the prestige that they gained was very great.

It must be remembered that the army plays a much greater part in the national life in France than it does in England, even in peace time, the manhood of the French nation being subject to conscription. The presence of priests and seminarists in the ranks even before the declaration of war had therefore a great influence.

We have seen how the presence of French priests in the ranks of the army has been of profound spiritual and moral good for the French soldier. But the work of the army chaplains is not without value and cannot be ignored. At the separation of Church and State, when it was resolved to abolish God in France, the army chaplains were completely suppressed. But eventually wiser and more Christian councils prevailed and an act was passed re-establishing them. But the operation of the act was adjourned *sine die*, and if there had been no great war, there might be no chaplains in the French army to-day. But at the outbreak of the war the act was immediately put into force and spiritual provision was after an interval of ten years officially recognised by the government and military authorities, though the amount of provision was by no means sufficient and the presence of priests in the ranks had to suffice to fill up the gaps where no official chaplain existed. Among the army chaplains there were some very outstanding men. For instance, Monseigneur Ruch was at the outbreak of war coadjutor bishop to Bishop Turinaz of Nancy. He was mobilised at the general mobilisation as an ordinary red-cross man in the garrison of Toul. However, with the passing of the

act and the good-will of his colonel, within a few days he received his appointment as chaplain which he held until the Armistice; his military career was a distinguished one and he gained several decorations, as befitted the son of an officer, who had served side by side with the English in the Crimean war.

The *aumoniers militaires* do not hold commissioned rank, but occupy a position more akin to the British Naval Chaplains, a position apart which means that they are equally accessible both to officers and men. This position must be infinitely more satisfactory than being commissioned, when there is bound to be a great gulf fixed between chaplains and men in the ranks.

But the real interest of the army chaplains' department is the great work it has done in the Rhineland where French troops have been in occupation since the Armistice. For at Mainz there are two Catholic bishops, a German and a Frenchman, and the question naturally arises, should Monseigneur Rèmond, who occupies a modest flat near the railway station, in contrast with the German bishop in the episcopal palace, be allowed in Germany at all? The Catholic Church is international; why should not French Catholics come under the jurisdiction of German bishops? And would not a French bishop become merely another source of friction between the German population and the troops? In England criticism arose against the system of a chaplain-general from the War Office interfering with the local jurisdiction of English diocesan bishops during the war. How much worse would the situation be if the military force was an occupying one in an enemy country?

But the presence of a French bishop as chaplain-general is absolutely necessary and in practice has not been found at all inimical to the interests of the conquered population; in fact the result has been rather the opposite.

Bishop Rèmond, titular Bishop of Clisma, who is the chaplain-general of the French troops, and whose jurisdiction is not limited to the Rhineland, but extends to French soldiers in North Africa and the French colonies, is a model of Christian courtesy and tact. He used to give to all his chaplains the advice, "Remember you are a Catholic priest first and a Frenchman afterwards," and this was the keynote of his behaviour towards the German clergy and Catholic population. And he put this excellent precept into practice. He has described his relations with the native Bishop of Mainz as "affectionate." At Confirmations and kindred ceremonies the German ecclesiastics were often invited to assist. The French had the rights under the Peace Treaty to commandeer churches for the use of their troops, but in practice this was never done. Bishop Rèmond has invariably been most insistent on the fact that some arrangements of a mutual nature should be entered into with the German authorities whenever it was necessary to find a church for the French troops. And in the case of ornaments and flowers and other little extras that were needed these must always be paid for. In the country the French chaplain would usually be billeted at the presbytery, and this would prove a most satisfactory arrangement. If the bishop were to give an official lunch he would generally invite the local German clergy, though these would sometimes refuse for fear of their own people. To pacify German nationalist sentiment, the bishop had even gone so far as to forbid the harmless French custom of putting banners to St. Joan up in the German churches, though this must have grievously wounded the sentiment of the average devout *poilu*, who is by nature passionately attached to the cult of the soldier maid of Domrémy.

Then at the time of the depreciation of the mark, the good bishop tried to assist the impoverished German clergy with gifts of money. He actually

distributed 60,000 francs, *honoraires de messe,* among them. He also started a St. Vincent de Paul Society for their assistance. But in 1924 the tables turned; the German mark became stabilised, French money fell badly. Another good thing that the bishop was able to do was to try to obtain more lenient treatment for some of the German civilians sentenced for offences against the French occupying forces. Particularly at the time of the occupation of the Ruhr, feeling between the two parties ran very high. There were certain ghastly crimes committed on both sides. It is even hinted that the bishop was able to obtain the commutation of certain death sentences imposed by French courts-martial upon German offenders. That this Christian spirit should be so in evidence is much to the credit of the French Church.

Doubtless Catholics of both countries have much to learn from each other. The French chaplain at Bonn lamented to the writer that the French had not that great sense of corporate worship as expressed by the magnificent congregational singing of the Germans, but at the same time he did not think that the individual German was as capable of devotion as the more mystically-minded Frenchman. But probably both sides have benefited from each other, and by the grace of God in the matter of the Catholic religion the curse of the occupation of one country by the troops of another has been transformed into a blessing.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS AND MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

FRANCE has a wonderful record of service in the foreign mission field which is almost entirely the work of the religious orders. It has been stated that France has more missionaries engaged in the work of the evangelisation of the heathen overseas than any other European Roman Catholic country. The mystical temperament coupled with evangelical zeal fits them to do this Christian work, which might be expected to emanate from a country which has produced such saints as St. Francois de Sales and the Curé d'Ars. The number of orders at work in France at the time of the suppression twenty years ago we saw in the second chapter to have been enormous. Doubtless the fact that many of these sought a refuge in other countries such as Spain and England has had much to do with the expansion of missionary enterprise, though Anglicans may reasonably think that the work of converting their own countrymen is largely misplaced zeal. The orders in France are engaged in work of every sort: education among the poor, sick nursing, contemplative and missionary. Much home mission work is done in France by these orders. The writer remembers a mission that took place some six years ago at Angers among all the Churches in that city, the missioners being Franciscans from Versailles. The mission concluded at Easter, and on the afternoon of that day an enormous congregation sat from 2.30 to 4.30, at the parish church of St. Serge, for Vespers, Benediction and two sermons of over half-an-hour each from the missioners, who, after the service, came round and shook hands with the people as they left the church.

But it is in the work of foreign missions that the French orders show such striking zeal. It was calculated that in 1901, just before the expulsion of the religious orders, nearly 7,400 monks and over 9,000 nuns were engaged in mission work overseas. If we compare these figures with the number of Anglican missionaries they work out rather to our shame, there being in 1925 somewhat under 1,400 white clergy, 1,800 women and 400 doctors engaged in work among the heathen. The principal missionary society, the *Missions Etrangères*, had in 1908, 37 bishops, 1,371 missionaries, 778 native priests, 3,050 catechists, 45 seminaries with 2,081 students, 305 religious men and 4,075 women, 5,700 churches and chapels, 347 crèches and orphanages with over 20,000 children, 484 dispensaries and 108 hospitals. Before the despoliation the money subscribed was very great. In 1898 the "Propaganda of Lyons," a kind of French S.P.G., collected over 4,000,000 francs (about £160,000) from France for missionary purposes. This sum unfortunately fell in after years, owing to more money being needed to support the Church at home; in 1908 it was a little over 3,000,000 francs.

The French missions are chiefly in France's colonies. Such parts as French North Africa, Syria, Madagascar and French Guiana have their full quota of French missionaries. It was a hundred years ago that Mother Jahxouvey went out to Guiana at the request of the government to civilise the unfortunate negroes who had been rescued from French men-of-war, Father Libermann in 1840 first undertook the work of evangelisation in Africa, while "Dirty Damien who washed the pots," in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, was one of the pioneers of evangelisation in the Oceanic Isles, his work among the lepers being world renowned. There are also missions in China and places which are colonised by races other than the French.

There seems to be something in the French temperament that fits them peculiarly for the religious life. If it is the vocation of English people to be particularly active, it also seems to be the vocation of the French to come apart for a little while and pray and contemplate, and the result is that great numbers are called to the religious life. It is, therefore, that two of the most marked figures in the recent history of the Church of France have both been religious, though each is of an entirely different type from the other.

In the year 1923 the French Church gave especial honour to three great Catholics, Pasteur, Pascal and Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Some might smile at seeing the last named placed with the other two; but neither Pasteur nor Pascal would understand it. They would be only too happy to see seated on a throne near them the figure of the little nun who died when she was only 24 years old and whose greatest virtue was that she always wished to resemble a little child, to seek salvation from day to day by little ways, to accept her lot as being a little soul, offering to our Lord little things. For behind this love for things little these great men would have found true greatness.

This little saint, who with St. Joan is the most loved of all the saints by the French, was born in 1873 and died in 1897; if she were alive to-day she would only be 55. And she lives so much in the hearts of French Catholics that she might almost be living in the flesh. Her life is an extraordinarily beautiful one, and incidentally throws a wonderful glimpse upon the interior of a devout Christian home. She lost her mother when she was only four years old, and was brought up by her dear old father and her four sisters who all entered eventually the Carmelite convent at Lisieux. The story of her life has been recounted by herself in a charming and simple manner, and this is fortunate, as a mass

of sentimental literature has grown up around her which we must confess might do her memory more harm than good. But the little saint was so full of real humility that her own autobiography besides being a literary gem is a wonderful revelation of character. A devout Catholic of the bourgeois class, her father Monsieur Martin had an idea in his youth that he might have a vocation for the religious life, and so did the mother, but this was not to be, yet together they were to bring up a family to the glory of God and His Church. Her real greatness stands out from the first, in her desire to be little, "God has created great saints whom we compare to a lily or a rose; but He also created lesser saints who must be content with being daisies and violets, and these can furnish a carpet for His feet. The more the plants of all kinds are ready to do His will, the more are they perfect."

But this frail little creature in body had in reality great strength of character. If she were determined on a thing, she would never yield. "When she says No, nothing will make her yield. I might put her in the cellar all day without getting Yes out of her," once said her mother. And when she was quite little she said, "I will choose all, and I won't be a saint by halves."

Her two elder sisters entered the convent and she, beginning to realise her vocation, wanted to enter too. She obtained consent from her father, but her age was a stumbling block to the authorities. She could not bear the idea of waiting, but she was a young lady of great determination. She put her case before the Bishop of Bayeux and was terrified at the interview. Her father took her to Rome where at the audience with Leo XIII. she took no heed of the rules that forbade her to speak to him, but with characteristic courage asked him if she might enter the Carmel. Her courage and her love for our

Lord had their reward; she was able to enter the following Easter.

The rest of her life was one of love for our Lord and utter abandonment of self. "I want to make known to souls," she says in recounting her life, "to tell them that there is only one thing we need do, to throw at our Lord's feet the flowers of our little everyday sacrifices, to hold fast to Him by them."

It is not usual that the Roman Church completes the long and difficult process of Canonisation so soon after a person's death. But an exception was made in the case of this simple little Norman maid, the little sister of many a *poilu* of the trenches, whose little life of love and humility fits her to rank with the great saints, and who is typically French in her utter abandonment of self and the close contact she made with our Lord, a gift that seems to be possessed by the French perhaps more than other European races.

And in Father de Foucauld, the hermit of the Sahara, we have a very similar type. It is a story of utter abandonment of self, a life of complete immolation and hardship in the service of God, yet how different an upbringing. De Foucauld was born in the purple, an officer, he went like most French soldiers to Africa, where the lure of that land caught him as it caught Ernest Psichari. But his conversion was not to be yet. A long while he lived unmindful of Church and Sacraments, and a life that would not bear examination. But he was to be converted in a marvellous way. There was at that time a certain priest at Paris only occupying the status of an assistant curate, but a most experienced director of souls, whose confessional was thronged and whose advice was followed on all sorts of matters. This modern *Curé d'Ars* met de Foucauld at the house of the latter's relations. The young man was attracted by him and used to go to hear his lectures. One day he went to the abbé:—

" Monsieur l'abbé, je n'ai pas la foi; je viens de vous demander de m'instruire."

" Mettez-vous à genous, confessez-vous à Dieu: vous croirez."

" Mais je ne suis pas venu pour cela."

" Confessez-vous." And after he had made his Confession he went up to the altar rails, by the abbé's instructions, and received his Communion.

The treatment of the young enquirer by this experienced priest is a proof of the fitness of the French in particular to be evangelists and directors of souls. There was no question of " making the message of Christ clear to the modern mind," but a very plain understanding of what was necessary for the soul.

And afterwards the young man became a Trappist, but somehow even this austere life was not hard enough for this ardent soul who yearned to give everything to our Lord. So he went back to Morocco and became a hermit in the desert. And here he lived for years and years until his assassination during the Great War by a hostile tribe, preaching and ministering to such French troops as came his way, teaching the gospel of Christ (rather than preaching it) by his example and life to the tribes of the locality, and perpetually interceding at the Holy Sacrifice (which he obtained a special Papal dispensation to say without a server) for the rest of the world, and giving himself wholly up to God.

These two, St. Thérèse and Charles de Foucauld, each in their own way are typical examples of the French mystical mind that can strive its uttermost to get into contact with God and give up everything for the service of the Master. And this is imbued in thousands of other French Catholics who have entered the religious life, and, whether by a contemplative life or by a more active life of sick-nursing or teaching, have vowed themselves wholly to our Lord.

CHAPTER X.

THREE CATHOLIC NOVELISTS.

THE most striking thing about modern French literature, when it is compared with English, is the manner in which fiction is taken seriously. The novel is not only to amuse; it is far more; it is intended to instruct. In any study, therefore, of the French Church where literature is the subject the novel should hold an important place.

We will glance for a while at three masters of contemporary fiction who are all living to-day, even if old men. And though their best work be done, they are nevertheless typical of all that is finest in French Catholic fiction.

Monsieur Paul Bourget was born at Amiens in 1852, though his family soon after moved to Clermont-Ferrand in the south, a fact which comes out in his writings. Though inclined to what is popularly known as "Reaction" and the royalist point of view, there is no finer delineator of character in contemporary fiction in any country and he has used his great talents in the service of his Church in masterly fashion.

After some verse, some essays (which include some English studies with a delightful description of undergraduate life at Oxford) and one or two light novels, Bourget in 1889 produced his first serious work *Le Disciple*. The key to his later work can be found most readily in the preface to this novel. He began to drive a wedge into the type of authors then most prominent in the nineteenth century, the school of thought that derided patriotism and religion and looked on life in a part pitying, part amused, part bored sort of manner, the type of work of which the late M. Anatole France was the chief exponent.

The story of *Le Disciple* is of a young man who heartlessly threw away his religion and the lessons of a good upbringing through imbibing the teachings of a certain philosopher, Adrien Sixte, who is taken as the type of philosopher then revered in France. Not that Monsieur Sixte was a bad man. He was well deserving of the character that he obtained from his housekeeper (she might have stepped straight from the pages of *La Comedie Humaine*), who gave him fish on *maigre* days (a fact which he never realised), in the hope of somehow saving his soul, remarking, " Le Bon Dieu ne serait pas le Bon Dieu s'Il avait le coeur de le damner." No, Sixte was not intentionally anything but thoroughly good and honest, but his good intentions in denying the existence of God and exalting his strange theories of sex, the human will and what not, paved the road to hell for young Breslou.

But the value of the book, especially in view of Bourget's later work, lies in the preface which is dedicated to the young men of the day. He realises the great responsibility of writers like himself to the growing up generation. He says how there were two sorts of young men, one given up to pleasure and the other to success. In both the aim is to " adorer son moi," and his object in writing the book is to show whither this egoism will lead. Do not treat religious ideas as things to be played with; do not let pride in one's intellectual powers make a man a cynic or a dilettante. This message of Bourget's was written when it was most necessary.

For at that time in France there was a kind of weariness of things of the spirit. Renan had cynically remarked that the men who went to the war in 1870 were incapable of an act of virtue and that it did not much matter to what country one belonged as long as one was left to think in peace. Up till the Great War there was constant warfare between this idea and that of Christianity and Patriotism,

which latter eventually triumphed, chiefly because when the German was at the gate, the former party began to see the folly of its ideas.

So Bourget became the writer of psychological novels. That is why his novels should be of especial interest to priests and to all Catholics. He combined in a wonderfully well-balanced manner, a mixture of his father's mathematical and scientific knowledge and the advantages of the classical education he had received at college. He possessed powers of close, scientific analysis, while having received a classical education and fine critical ability and appreciation for Art in all its forms, he was able to turn his talents to good account in literature. He showed that it was possible for a great writer to be also a good Catholic and that the Catholic Faith was the supreme need for the world's evils.

It has been urged in criticism of Bourget's religion that it is largely pragmatic, that he puts forward the Faith as a panacea for evil entirely from the practical point of view and does not examine the theological verity of what he believes. This is to a certain extent true. But it must be remembered that it is not the novelist's business to enter into abstruse theological arguments (that had best be left to the professional theologian whom France does not lack). Further, the Faith does provide a working philosophy of life. The Englishman too often prides himself on being practical, and too often he " muddles through " with his religion. It has been left to the unpractical Frenchman to produce a Catholic novel worthy of ranking as great literature, and English Catholics may well be proud when they produce a Paul Bourget.

Not all that Bourget has written is essentially the religious novel. *L'Ecuyère* is the romance of an English horse-trainer's daughter and a Parisian man-about-town, while in *La Geôle* there is a carefully worked out study of the salvation of a youngster with suicidal tendencies inherited from his father, the salva-

tion being accomplished by the lad's mother and Doctor Vernat who strangely enough was *incroyant*, and never till his dying day had any faith. Yet he is drawn with much sympathy and admiration as a great moral force, a hater of humbug, and a faithful follower of duty. It was evidently the author's wish to be strictly fair to non-Catholics. In this much of the strength of Bourget's writings lies. He can be scrupulously just to the other side. The anti-clerical is not necessarily bad; in fact, he can be a very decent sort. This comes out in *Une Divorce*, a scathing indictment of the French divorce laws where the unbelieving husband says to his wife, " I cannot believe in Christ. He was the victim of human injustice." (The abstract passion for justice is strongly rooted in the French republican.) " No, no," replies the woman, " He is rather human Love."

Where the anti-clerical fails is when he is up against the realities of life, against sin, when there is no Love of God to bring him through. This is brought out especially in *L'Etape* to show the folly of bringing up children with merely abstract ideals of justice and truth, without the means of grace to enable those ideals to be carried out, and further shows the folly of the doctrinaire Jacobin who was so convinced that his children shared his views and ideals that it was indeed a cruel awakening to be faced one day with two unpleasant facts about them, that one of his sons was a forger and his only daughter a harlot. In contrast to him stands the Catholic professor Ferrand, who, when Monneron's other son, Jean, asks him to lend him the necessary sum to enable his brother's defalcation at the bank to be covered up, gives him the money without a murmur, never asking what it is for and telling him to calculate the interest at five per cent and give it to the poor. A side-plot gives a graphic description of a highbrow society, the Tolstoy Union, organised by a brilliant young Jew, Cremieu-Dax, to which Jean Monneron belongs,

yet this society came to grief with its more revolutionary members because the committee were sufficiently broad-minded as to ask a priest to address them on a scientific subject. Temperance workers will also find the teetotal, co-operative restaurant organised by M. Dax of interest with its hygienic drinks, a remarkable experiment in a country like France, where both wine producing and wine drinking is firmly rooted in the inhabitants.

Le Démon de Midi is not as says the thirtieth volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* a series of travel sketches concerning the South of France; *Midi* here means Noonday and the title of the book is taken from the 91st psalm, "I shall not be afraid of the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday." There comes a time in a man's life when certain temptations of his youth which he thinks he has conquered, rise up and seek to overpower him; more than ever, therefore, does he need the aid that the Church can give him. Louis Savignan is to be deputy-elect of a certain district, and though a Catholic, has been promised the support of the wealthy, vulgar, anti-clerical Calvières, whose wife was at one time engaged to him, but had broken off the engagement. The temptation to seduce his old lover becomes very strong. The book gives a wonderful and graphic picture of French politics, but perhaps the most interesting feature to Anglicans is the description of the apostate priest Fauchon, who advocates clerical marriage and founds a sect called the "Catacombe," which meets in some obscure cellar of Paris where he celebrates a Mass of his own in a Gothic chasuble (which particularly excites the author's scorn) and after the manner, as he supposes, of the primitive Church. But the abbé Fauchon's espousal of an innocent girl less than half his age does not bring him the happiness that he had looked for, and the plea for a celibate priesthood is most ably and convincingly argued.

The subject of the Life after Death and the happiness of the death of a good Christian in contrast with a man, who, though moral and good, had no faith is put forth with remarkable thoroughness in *Le Sens de la Mort*, which though it has a hospital of the Great War as a background, is in no sense a war book; it could quite well have been written with a slightly different setting, yet with the same appeal. The plot concerns a brilliant surgeon and his wife who during the war organised a marvellous hospital in Paris where wounded men from the front were cured of wounds which might have been considered hopeless elsewhere. But the brilliant surgeon learns that he has cancer and only a few months to live. His wife and he make a suicide pact, as they are absolutely devoted. But there comes into the hospital a cousin of the wife, a pious Breton, mortally wounded. The contrast lies between the unbelieving doctor and the believing, simple minded soldier, so that in the end the woman is persuaded that it is her duty to live and not to die in a selfish manner. The doctor is a great tragedy. He is full of goodness, but yet he cannot believe, and he becomes like the young man in the gospel story who lacked one thing.

Monsieur Bourget has undoubtedly done a great work. He has taken the great problems of life, he has realised what life means with its difficulties and temptations to men of all sorts of character and social rank and he has endeavoured with consummate success to show that the one and only solution of these things is through a lively faith in God's mercy and the Church's sacraments, and he has further shown that France if it is to be a great nation must advance along the road of religion and patriotism and not of anti-clericalism and selfishness.

Monsieur Rénè Bazin is an author of a different type from Monsieur Bourget, and does not equal him in literary rank, though his appeal is more popular,

especially to English readers. Born at Angers a year later than Bourget, he excels himself in his powers of descriptive writing, especially where it concerns the countryside. In this respect he can best be compared with Hardy, whom he somewhat resembles in his power of depicting country scenes, but what a contrast between the two men! It might be said of the Dorset novelist that he is only familiar with one service of the Church, the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, which he has spent all his gifted powers in ridiculing and maligning. Monsieur Bazin writes about real places, which he calls invariably by their real names, a practice rarely followed in English literature. The most remarkable trait of his descriptive writing is familiarity with apparently every corner of France (and even outside France) which is pictured with such astonishing beauty and fidelity that most readers of his works imagine him to be a native of the particular part of France described in the particular book they are reading. This is a manifest impossibility. An early novel, *Les Noellets*, deals with Anjou, *Les Oberlé* (the most well-known of the novels on account of its political significance in connection with Alsace) with Lower Alsace, *Les Nouveaux Oberlé* with Upper Alsace, *Madame Corentin* with Brittany and Jersey, *Ma Tante Giron* with the Craonnais, *L'Isolée* with Lyons and Nîmes, *La Blé qui lève* with the Nivernais in Central France and in *La Barrière*, he even gets across the English Channel, describing a lawn tennis match at Westgate.

He is an Angevin, a land which has had historical connections with England and also resembles it in some ways, whether by the hedgerows so rare in Europe as a rule, or by the love of home and religion which was common at any rate in England a few years ago. His first novel, *Les Noellets*, concerns a young man of Fief-Sauvin in Anjou, a village far removed from the beaten track, but in actual

existence, and whose present incumbent, the abbé Audouin, is known to the writer of this book. But it is in other works that he directly concerns himself with the Catholic Faith. *Donatienne* has to do with marital infidelity and with the problem of the young married women of the country districts who are persuaded by the lure of large wages to leave their families to become foster mothers to the children of wealthy women in Paris, who are too weak or too indolent or too indifferent to nurse their own babies. In *Madame Corentin* he boldly tackles the question of the unhappy marriage. The book should rather be called *Simone,* for the story does not concern so much that rather uninteresting personage, Madame Corentin, who has been legally separated from her husband, but with the delightful only daughter, Simone, who brings her parents back again to each other. And in striking contrast to the half-educated Madame Corentin, who has married above her position, is shown her simple sister, who marries a Breton sailor. Her faith and calm courage the night news comes that her husband has perished in a wreck, the night on which her child is born, is a graphic picture of the Breton fisherwomen, of whom the late Sabine Baring Gould wrote so enthusiastically.

But the two most powerful novels that Monsieur Bazin has written are *L'Isolée* and *La Blé qui lève.* The former has been translated into English under the title of *The Nun* and the latter under the title of the *Rising Corn,* though this is now out of print. These are no rosy picture of the Catholic religion in France. They are rather the opposite. The first deals with the cruel laws that drove the religious orders out of France twenty years ago. There is a small community of nuns at Lyons, whose mother house is in Clermont-Ferrand. There are only five of them, engaged in the work of a little school. These poor, unfortunate women hear they are to be dispersed.

Alarmed, the mother superior runs to the priest who acts as visitor to the order. He is a moderate, "safe" man of the stuff of which many an Anglican rural dean is made. He is frankly annoyed at the good lady's visit, as he is in a hurry to catch a train to take the waters at Vichy, and he can offer little encouragement and says that the trouble would not have come about if they had taken his advice of a "compromise."

The good mother thereupon turns to the abbé Monechal, a priest who is drawn with rare charm by Monsieur Bazin, and who might be the counterpart of Lyons' own saint, Père Chevrier. He lives in a poor, ill-furnished third story flat in a working class quarter. He is at the call of the sick, the poor and the suffering at any hour of the night and day. There are many such priests, to the honour of Christ's Church in France, in Lyons to-day. He at once realised their appalling state and the evil that might happen to them thrown back upon the world and their own slender resources, gave the mother good counsel to watch over her four sisters, even when they were separated, went and saw a rich merchant of the town on their behalf, who gave them help. He told them how to depart with dignity and gave them his blessing.

Poor sisters! They yielded to the police, amidst cries from certain inhabitants of their suburb who loved them and would have prevented their expulsion, if they had dared, of "Vive les soeurs." They meet for the last time in the third class waiting room of the Perrache station. They say their last office together. From time to time a porter comes in and shouts the names of stations to which the next train is going. One by one at this call, "just as the executioner called his victims to the guillotine in the days of the Terror," each one gets up and goes to her destination, each to a different corner of France, leaving the poor superior alone at the end

to say a last "Hail, Mary!" by herself. One can never pass through Lyons' station without thinking of these poor, unfortunate sisters.

La Blé qui lève concerns the centre of France notably indifferent to the Catholic Faith. The sacristan ringing the bell for the people's Mass on Low Sunday observes: "Are the vicar's parishioners going to come to-day? On Easter Day I counted 92. Yes, and some famous scoundrels among them! They come at Easter, All Saints, to funerals. But on Low Sunday! There are seven in the church." The server slowly buttoned his cassock; the abbé Roubaix put on his vestments. "Good people," said the bell, "Christ is risen! He suffered, He has come to life again; come, the despised, the people of no account, the unhappy, that is to say, everyone, come! I call you!" But the people didn't come. When the vicar left the vestry there were four women, a child, little Eli Gabaud, son of the socialist lock-keeper, old sergeant Dixneuf, Michael de Maximien, his valet, and the sacristan, singing Alleluia. Where were those who were not singing Alleluia?

The scene is one of intense pathos. The poor curé who had come there from another district six months before was heartbroken. He did not fear hostility, but he feared stifling, strangling indifference. In his despair he wrote to his mother: "I have been able to do nothing with these people the few months I have been with them. My heart is beginning to lose courage. Yet I have received Holy Orders and am responsible for their sins and shortcomings. There were seven at Mass this morning. You can understand how I suffer, mother. There are many mothers like you who have the soul of a priest and have given it to their children. When you receive my letter, say a prayer for me."

There is something really beautiful in this poor priest's letter to his mother, the natural corollary to a Faith where the Holy Mother of God is held

in high honour. The writer's whole soul seems to go out into pity and love for this worthy priest with a passionate love of souls and a passionate love of the Christ.

But the most remarkable passage in the book concerns a description of a three-day retreat for working men. This, as a matter of fact, does not take place in France, but just across the Belgian frontier. One of the abbé Roubaix's parishioners, Gilbert Cloquet, is badly treated by his daughter. Weary and dispirited he leaves the neighbourhood and goes to work on a farm near Valenciennes, in the industrial North. Here he has an affair with the farmer's wife and a quarrel with a fellow labourer. Wretched and contemplating suicide he falls in with a kindly butcher of Quievrain, just across the Belgian frontier, who takes him into a retreat. There is a remarkably fine description of life in the retreat house, sketched in a light and delicate fashion which makes the reader want to know more. Little pieces of the Jesuit retreat conductor's addresses are given.

"You are a wonder, you working men who come here into retreat. When I think of the great difficulties you have in grasping religious truth, of so many other difficulties you have in coming here, I feel as much your admirer as your friend. You have little luggage when you come here; a paper parcel, a pair of shoes, and a shirt, on the end of a stick. But the luggage of truth which your spirit carries is much smaller still. Do you know what I believe? It is that you are the forerunners of those who are rising up everywhere, from the mine, from the factory, from the countryside, asking for the paradise for which they thirst. You ask it from God; the rest merely ask it from men with guns, in revolution, with outcries and blasphemy. They will get everything except what they are looking for. You think that it is bread that you need. It is God that you need. Pray to Him with me."

Cloquet, unwilling to go to the retreat at first, is persuaded to stay at least one day. At the end of the day he would go, but is stayed by one of the priests who tells him how to meditate on the addresses. The good abbé stretches out his arms in the form of a cross, saying, " Mon frère et mon ami, embrasse-moi." " Cloquet felt beat against his heart the heart of someone who loved him. The words entered Gilbert's heart by a door that had long been closed, that of love." The next day he made his confession and after that his " Pâques de Novembre," he who had rejected the Sacraments for so many years.

It is probably rare that the experience of a retreat, a thing so intimate and personal, has been described in writing. And it certainly requires no small power to do adequate justice to such a spiritual experience. Yet in no other passages have we found anything of such power, of such spiritual insight, of such an evangelical love of suffering humanity, as in these of Bazin. There is no trace of sentimentality, the description is of such a delicate nature, the whole personality of the author seems to come out as it were of a priest speaking a discourse rather than of an author writing a popular novel. It says much for the French public that his books are widely read. Monsieur Bazin held a professorship at the Catholic University at Angers, and certain pious Catholics with more zeal than common sense complained to the bishop that he was wasting his time writing works of fiction instead of attending to his duties. Happily the bishop of Angers at that time was the great Alsatian, Monseigneur Freppel, a man of both wisdom and a sense of humour, who told the young author to carry on with his work.

Another Catholic novelist is Monsieur Henri Bordeaux, a little younger than Bourget and Bazin, and whose style resembles that of the latter. A native of Chambery in the Savoy, he writes almost

entirely about that country, the land of St. Francis de Sales. In *La Petite Mademoiselle* he gives a graphic account of the expulsion of the religious orders in 1905. The work certainly has a theme that would strike the Englishman as ludicrous, but there is a grand passage in which the hero comes out in defence of some unfortunate monks expelled by the police after the law of congregations. The story concerns a rather extraordinary young lady who refused the hero in marriage until he should be locked up for some crime. He found it extremely difficult to get himself into trouble, and even when he assaulted the police who were carrying out the expulsion order he was acquitted owing to the spirited advocacy of his counsel, who happened to be his future father-in-law.

It is part of Monsieur Bordeaux's genius that he is unequalled in describing the minor local official who is usually contemptible in all countries, but especially when he is a French anti-clerical. In *La Peur de Vivre*, the mayor of a Savoy townlet receives a telegram to say that the son of the local *grande dame*, a devout Catholic, has been killed fighting in Africa. It would be his duty, according to French custom, for the mayor to bring the sad news himself to the bereaved mother, but taking the advice of his secretary, the anti-clerical village schoolmaster, he sent the village constable to break the news instead of going himself, which was a direct insult to the family. The petty minded, anti-clerical officials congratulated themselves on the chance that had allowed them to insult a local Catholic, but the next day the laugh was on the other side of their faces, for a further telegram from Paris announced that the young man had been killed fighting bravely against a hostile African tribe, that he had gained the *Croix de guerre* and that a general was coming from Paris to present this posthumous honour in public to the bereaved mother. The mayor to cover his blunder turned

round upon the schoolmaster and procured his dismissal on the ground that he was unkind to the children. *Le petit fonctionnaire* is always a detestable type and is not unknown in lands outside France, but nowhere is he more detestable than when trying to persecute the Church with pin pricks after this fashion.

Monsieur Bordeaux's style resembles Monsieur Bazin's very much in its power of depicting scenery, though it is not so varied and is more or less confined to one place. And he has done a very similar work. France is indeed fortunate in having three such novelists, and though they are all old men now, their inspiration will doubtless be great on posterity.

CHAPTER XI.

OTHER CATHOLIC WRITERS.

So far we have been considering three men, who though all alive to-day, are old men. It may quite reasonably be asked, How far has their mantle fallen upon the younger men? Are they carrying on their Catholic and patriotic ideas? As a partial answer to this question stands Ernest Psichari. The place of this young soldier who made the supreme sacrifice for his country upon the twentieth day of the war is a very remarkable one. Although his literary remains are very small (three books in all), *La Vie du Centurion* will rank him for ever among the immortals. His mother was the daughter of Ernest Renan, but what greater contrast could there be between the agnostic scholar and the simple soldier, who said like the Centurion in the gospel: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Though this little work is written as fiction, it can scarcely be classed as a novel, it is really an autobiography and the hero, Maxence, is the author himself. The work is honoured with a preface by Monsieur Bourget, who estimates it very highly and says that in his judgment the pages in which Maxence tells of the dialogue between God and himself are among the finest of which French mystical literature can be proud. The story is of a young officer, Maxence, who sent with his men to French North Africa, passed from unbelief to belief, from despair to hope, from hatred to love. With his love of God grows up a love of country. (Catholicism and Patriotism are closely linked up in Psichari's eyes.) When he went to Africa he fell in love with the

wide open plains and the great silences, but he felt no gratitude towards his country for having sent him thither. Rather, he hated her, having found in France hitherto only disorder, vice and misery. He was the son of a " colonel lettré, voltairien et pis," who, having brought him up to read Latin and Greek authors and nothing else, gave him a very poor preparation for life. " His father had fed his brain, not his soul." In his youth he had had no protection against evil.

Sick at heart and disgusted he goes on his military expedition to Africa. He comes into contact with Islam and is moved by it to a certain extent, but realises how inferior the Moors are to Europeans. When a Moor says that the work of the learned is of more worth than the blood of martyrs, his soul made for heroism and great deeds, is not impressed. He finds a solace in the great silence of the desert. " Woe to those who know not silence! Silence is a little piece of heaven coming down to mankind." What a fine motto for retreatants! And when he came out of his retreat it was to cry aloud, " I will die of thirst in the desert and I will yet say that the day is blessed, for I have seen You present in Your justice, as I have seen You present in Your pity, and I am not concerned with phantoms such as thirst and hunger and fatigue, but with You Who are reality. My God, help me to follow the way where You have sent me, remembering the words of Your Son Who said: ' It is not you who have chosen Me, but I Who have chosen you.' "

The consummation of the whole lies in the realisation of God's eternal love. God is not only a principle, or an idea, or a dogma, but He is our Father and our Friend and our Brother together. He is not a word, nor a chimera, but sustenance. He is not the Good nor the Reason nor the Ideal but a Person, that is to say, Jesus Christ the mediator,

Jesus Christ the second person, Jesus Christ true God and true Man, God of pity and of love.

The young man finds God and is happy. Alone in the desert and far from a church, he thinks nevertheless of his brethren in France going up to the altar to receive Holy Communion and finding Christ really and truly present in the Sacred Host. Like the Centurion, Maxence was a man under authority and like a true soldier he wanted to serve a personal leader; not an idea but a master, Jesus. However, much we may regret Psichari's death at the early age of thirty, there was something peculiarly fitting about his death in battle in the Great War.

For this young man represented a change of thought among the literary people that preceded the War. Fifty years ago the leading literary figures had been cynics like Renan, and had derided patriotism in the same way as they derided religion. This cynical attitude has been continued down to our own day by the late M. Anatole France. But there were rising up writers who like M. Bourget took the opposite attitude. A typical member of this class was Charles Peguy, to whom Psichari dedicated *La Vie du Centurion*. He also gave his life for his country in the early days of the great struggle. But he was of totally different origin from his friend, who was born in the purple of an officer's family with the aristocratic training of St. Cyr, the French Sandhurst, behind him. His mother was one of those delightful old ladies, who not without reason fill some of our more correct Anglicans with horror, when they pester strangers for a *sou* in the most solemn portion of the Mass; she was a keeper of the chairs in Chartres Cathedral. He says of his grandmother that she "gardait les vaches, qui ne savait pas lire et écrire, à qui je dois tout, de qui je tiens tout ce que je suis." This son of Mrs. Miff, the pew-opener, seems to have drifted into Paris without anything very much in the way of religion,

but he picked up education there and he also seems to have picked up something there which he had not found amidst the chairs and stained glass of Chartres Cathedral, namely religion. And he learned to give the world prose, fine rolling prose, which rolls like the great rolling plains that surround Chartres and Orleans, the plains of his birth and his ancestry. His works chiefly appeared in the form of articles known as *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. Many of them are bound up with the intricacies of French politics and would not have much interest for English people. But he showed quite clearly that Pacificism was a humbug and he showed too that he understood the people of Paris though he was not a native of that city.

" Singulier peuple de Paris, peuple de rois, peuple roi; profondément et véritablement peuple, aussi profondément, aussi véritablement roi; dans le même sens, dans la même attitude et le même geste peuple et roi; du même esprit peuple et roi."

He is describing the Parisians' reception of the King of Spain, that curious people of Paris that understand how to receive a king better than any other people in the world, though it will have none for itself. But Peguy is invariably at his best when writing something connected with St. Joan, probably because she is the incarnation both of Catholicism and Patriotism. In one of the *Cahiers* he imagines the saint looking round on the various great cities of France and comparing them with her own little Domrémy and reflecting upon her village Bethlehem in the land of Juda which was not the least among the cities of Juda. And in this it is obviously Peguy himself who is speaking.

" Vous Chartres, ville unique du pays de France, cathédrale unique au monde, Chartres, diocése, ville unique au royaume de France, Chartres, qui êtes dévouée à notre Dame, Chartres qui êtes dévouée,

dédiée, donnée à notre Dame, Chartres qui êtes vouée, qu'est-ce que vous êtes, Chartres, grande ville, en comparaison de ce petit bourg? Et vous aussi, Orleans, vous enfin vous n'êtes rien, Orleans ville de Loire, dédiée à ce grand saint Aignan. Or vous n'êtes rien, villes chrétiennes, grandes villes, résidences de chrétienté, chaires, cathédrales de sainteté vous n'êtes rien. Car je vous dis en vérité ce petit bourg perdu a tout pris, un jour, une fois dans le temps; une fois dans l'éternité; une fois pour toutes, une fois pour toutes les fois; un jour furtif, il a pris pour éternellement tout ce qui compte."

Turning to poetry, Monsieur Montier, founder of the Philippins, has written a charming collection of poems under the title of *L'Idéale Jeunesse*. As might be expected from such a writer they have to do with the young man, to whom their learned author has devoted the best part of his life. His ideal is really a very English one, the *mens sana in corpore sano* of the English public school.

" Sois robuste, mon fils, et garde sain ton corps
L'âme est plus ferme aussi dans une chair plus ferme."

In *Deus, Ecce Deus* he addresses the young man who has just made his Communion:—

" Voilà le grand mystère et que Dieu nous révéle;
Voilà ses dons; voilà le prix de notre foi!
Reconnais, o mon fils, ta dignité,
Ce n'est plus toi qui vis, c'est Dieu qui vit en toi."

It is interesting to note that this collection of poems is honoured with a preface from M. Sully Prudhomme.

But the poet of our own time who has the power of being able to put into the most beautiful language simple thoughts about the great Catholic truths is undoubtedly Paul Claudel. There is nothing intellectual about his writings, at any rate in the apologetic sense, though they are full of mysticism. He is usually at his best when he is at his simplest. For

instance, he has written a prayer for Sunday morning, when the Catholic is about to start for his early Mass:—

"Amen! Au nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint Esprit!
Je suis prêt, c'est moi!
Mon Dieu je suis ressuscité et je suis encore avec Toi!
Je dormais et j'étais couché ainsi qu'un mort dans la nuit.

Dieu dit: Que la lumière soit! et je me suis réveillé comme on pousse un cri!"

And further on:

"Supperposez aux six jours le Septième que Vous Vous êtes réservé.
Ah, ce n'est point Samedi, c'est Dimanche, et le coup de la première messe va sonner."

But it is inadequate to do full justice to this beautiful poem, which should be read in its entirety.

He has also written a series of fourteen poems upon the fourteen Stations of the Cross. In the second Station he writes:—

"On lui rend ses vêtements et la croix est lui apportée.
'Salut,' dit Jésus, 'O Croix que j'ai longtemps désirée!'
Et toi, regarde, chrétien, et frémis! Ah, quel instant solennel
Que celui où le Christ pour la première fois accepte la Croix éternelle!
O consommation en ce jour de l'arbre dans le Paradis!
Regarde, pêcheur, et vois à quoi ton péché a servi.
Plus de crime sans un Dieu dessus et plus de croix sans le Christ!
Certes le malheur de l'homme est grand, mais nous n'avons rien à dire,
Car Dieu est maintenant dessus, qui est venu non pas expliquer, mais remplir.
Jésus reçoit la Croix comme nous recevons la Sainte Eucharistie:
'Nous lui donnons du bois pour son pain,' comme il est dit par le prophète Jérémie.
Ah, que la croix est longue, et qu'elle est énorme et difficile!

Qu'elle est dure! Qu'elle est rigide! Que c'est lourd, le poids du pécheur inutile!
Que c'est long à porter pas à pas jusqu'à ce qu'on meure dessus!
Est-ce vous qui allez porter cela tout seul, Seigneur Jésus?
Rendez-moi patient à mon tour du bois que vous voulez que je supporte.
Car il nous faut porter la croix avant que la croix nous porte."

There is in this poem much that is both original and beautiful. There is also a key to the attitude of Claudel and many French Catholics of his period to life and religion. There is the "it's not to reason why, 'tis but to do or die" attitude of the well-disciplined soldier. Our Lord is come, "non pas expliquer, mais remplir." Humbly, He receives the wood in place of bread, He takes up the cross as we should receive the Blessed Sacrament. What a wonderful and really unique idea, and alas! that so many people should even find it difficult to get up to receive the Blessed Sacrament at an eight o'clock Mass on a Sunday!

It is characteristic of writers like Claudel and Psichari that the apologetic side, the intellectual side of the Catholic Faith, never seemed to trouble them. The Catholic Faith was accepted without questioning as the one thing necessary for a man's salvation, the one thing necessary to save France. There was no need for a Christian Evidence Society to prove that these verities are indeed true in the face of the doubter. The attitude is again exemplified in the abbé Huvelin's remark to de Foucauld; when the latter came to the priest to ask him questions on the Faith, he was just peremptorily told to make his Confession. This is exactly the opposite to our own day in England, where people seem to be so bothered with Christian Evidence that they never seem to have any time left in which to learn to say their prayers, or contemplate God. Of course, this

attitude is a great deal more likely to arise in France than in England, for in France the only form of Christianity that ever has in its history had any hold on the people is Catholicism, whereas in England divisions of opinion and consequent different forms of the Christian religion will exist to the end of time. Protestantism in France was not expelled from that country because a certain king chose to revoke the Edict of Nantes that gave the Huguenots liberty of residence; it died because it had never caught the imagination of the logical French people outside a certain group of wealthy middle class persons, and if there had ever been the smallest popular opinion behind it, no king would have dared to expel it.

But at the same time it must be realised that this attitude is not altogether commendable. For there must be some sort of intellectual defence of the Christian religion. The work of the Christian Evidence Society must not be disparaged, and if there is no apologetic, there will be a consequent weakness in the Christian religion, for it will inevitably cause the enemy to blaspheme. And it gave opportunities for men like the late Fr. Tyrrell to attempt a modernist movement. Of course, it was comparatively easy for the Vatican with its iron discipline to crush such a movement, but is such a policy wise? Whatever our answer may be, however, we must at least admit that, in just that period before the war when the foe was making ready for battle it was writers like Bourget and Claudel and Psichari who gave France just what she wanted, not a call to the lecture room to discuss the Virgin Birth in the light of modern criticism, but a call to a confession of sin, to looking the facts of the world and evil in the face, a call to prepare for the great ordeal that was to break over her in 1914. Perhaps now there is more leisure for speculation.

The finest of Claudel's poems is undoubtedly the

Processional Ode, which starts with the thanksgiving for the grace received at Holy Communion and after a contemplation of the Day of Judgment ends upon the triumphant notes of the Creed of St. Athanasius,

" Je crois sans y changer un seul point ce que mes pères ont cru avant moi,
Confessant le Sauveur des hommes et Jésus qui est mort sur la croix,
Confessant le Père qui est Dieu, et le Fils qui est Dieu, et le Saint Esprit qui est Dieu,
Et cependant pas trois dieux, mais un seul Dieu."

And he contemplates his little son in his cradle who,

" gazouille au soleil levant, son petit coeur tout rempli d'une joie innocente,
Parceque Dieu ne l'a point créé pour la mort, mais pour la vie de la vision vivante!"

As with all Catholics his ideas of the family life are very strong.

But French Catholics have not only produced poets. They have a very proud record of scholars and historians. The late M. Thureau-Dangin has a great interest for Anglicans by reason of his great work, *La Renaissance Catholique en Angleterre*, which has been translated into English and has earned merited praise from those who are intimate with the history of the Tractarian Revival. This book deals with that revival and also with the spread of Roman Catholicism in England during the last hundred years. The writer deals most sympathetically with the Anglo-Catholic point of view, is remarkably accurate and painstaking and has caught, what must be extremely difficult to one not educated in England, the spirit of Oxford University life. This book has had a very profound influence in making Anglo-Catholicism widely known among French priests as it has had a large circulation. It is mentioned by M. Goyau in one of his essays on Social Catholicism.

M. Goyau is the literary protagonist of the Catho-

lic Social Movement. He is an historian, scholar and essayist of no mean order, coupled with a lively sense of the Church taking a lead in matters of economics where Christian principles are concerned and a profound belief that through the Catholic Church and through her alone can social justice be ultimately achieved. His greatest work is a two volume history about religious affairs in Germany, *L'Allemagne Religieuse,* one volume being devoted to Protestantism and the other to Catholicism. But his writings chiefly take the form of essays. The principal is a three volume collection entitled *Autour du Catholicisme Social* in which various aspects of the Catholic Church in relation to the social order are discussed. The third volume concludes with a particularly striking exposition of the Beatitudes of which the following is a specimen. Talking of "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," he thus gives our Lord's interpretation of it:—

"Je suis venu précisément pour apprendre aux hommes que ce qu'il y a de plus inestimable ici-bas, ce n'est point la richesse que les violents peuvent conquérir; ce n'est point le sol, que les violents peuvent s'arroger; ce ne sont même point les énergies physiques, que les violents peuvent subjuguer; ce sont les âmes.

J'ai été l'émancipateur des âmes.

Or, c'est aux doux, et à eux seuls, que j'ai décerné le privilége de posséder les âmes."

Among M. Goyau's other works are a two volume collection of essays about education from both religious and moral points of view entitled *L'Ecole d'aujourd'hui,* a short essay on French Freemasonry, and *Lendemains de Unité,* concerning Italian affairs. He has also written various tracts and essays for the *Action Social* as well as a preface to the incumbent of Audincourt's little book in which he describes the settlement of the Peugeot motor works' strike.

"Voici vraiment un livre dramatique; on y voit

l'Eglise, puissance de paix se mêler, un mois durant, par l'organe d'un curé, à l'effervescence d'un conflit social; elle descend sur le forum; elle entre en pourparlers avec des patrons; elle s'aventure en des meetings où les orateurs sont les membres de la C.G.T., voire même des communistes; elle fait la navette entre les réunions populaires, où se prépare une résistance; elle s'expose, de part et d'autre, à la méfiance des intérêts hostiles, au blame des passions surexcitées, elle accepte ce péril, et elle en triomphe."

In these words M. Goyau sums up the whole Social Catholic Movement in France. He commends the Church, through her priest M. Jacquot, for acting as mediator between masters and men, though nowhere does he suggest that she ought to take sides. He goes on to describe Cardinal Manning's intervention in the London dock strike; he might well have added also Bishop Westcott's mediation between the Durham coal owners and the miners. He rightly deserves the title of literary exponent of Social Catholicism in France, and a study of his works will show anyone interested in this remarkable movement what it really stands for.

Nor does France lack distinguished theologians and it is not necessary to look for them outside the orthodox ranks in men like the abbé Loisy. M. Tixeront has written an admirable three volume work on the history of dogma. There is Monseigneur Baudrillart, rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris. One of his most valuable works is a life of his famous predecessor in office, Mgr. Hulst. It especially illustrates the difficulties encountered by critical students from the ultra-conservatism of Roman Catholic historians. Monseigneur Baudrillart is titular bishop of Himeria.

Monseigneur Batiffol is of interest to English people as he took part in the Malines Conversations. He is the author of important historical and dogmatic

works. The chief of these is a series in four volumes entitled, *Le Catholicisme des origines à St. Léon.* He also wrote a book on the Eucharist which for some reason or other found its way on to the Index, though this is a fate which has fallen more than one French theologian before now. *L'Eglise naissante* has gone through a good many editions. He is certainly the most distinguished living theologian in the French Church.

M. Henri Brèmond is an example of a priest and writer who has risen to academic rank; to the joy of French Catholics he was elected to the French Academy on April 19th, 1923. He was brought up in England by the Jesuits, though he subsequently left this order, and for a while he was under a cloud through association with the late Fr. Tyrrell. His greatest work is a monumental *Histoire litteraire du Sentiment religieux en France.* He has also produced an *Apologie pour Fénèlon* and a life of Sir Thomas Moore. His works are characterised by the charm of their style.

So briefly we have been able to look at some of the more important literary figures in France during recent times, though the list is by no means exhausted. And it should be borne in mind that there are many Catholics who do not write specifically about religious matters or let religious matters bear upon their work, yet whose influence is certainly very great. Such a man would be Professor Koszul, the principal teacher of English in the newly constituted University of Strasburg, who has produced recently a series of translations into French of Shakespeare's plays, a by no means easy task. M. Koszul has had much to do with the founding of the Information Bureau in Strasburg and the publication of its monthly journal *Notre Droit,* and he has been able to contribute articles on education.

CHAPTER XII.

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS.

FRANCE can boast of something which England can not, a daily newspaper which is definitely religious. Although British daily newspapers are not actively hostile, and are even friendly in a patronising sort of manner at times, despite their frequent extreme ignorance of ecclesiastical matters, there is not one daily paper, not even the *Daily News* with its Non-conformist backing, which is definitely connected with any religious body. *La Croix*, on the other hand, is controlled by the Assumptionist fathers, even though its very able editor, M. Jean Guiraud (or perhaps it would be more correct to say, principal leader writer), is a layman, and the greater portion of the capital was put up by another layman, M. Veron-Vrau.

La Croix is a typical clerical newspaper. A member of its editorial staff told the writer at the time of the elections of 1924 that there was no official "Catholic" party in France as there is in Belgium and other Catholic countries and that it was a very good thing for French Catholicism that there was not such a political party; this paper also (perhaps it is a little surprising) did not command the faithful to vote for Monsieur Poincaré's *bloc national* at this election, but merely said that all Catholics should go to the polls and *bien voter*, and left it at that. Yet the tone is extremely clerical and conservative and does not commend itself to all Catholics, especially the more up-to-date Catholics of the towns. It is its boast that it enters every country presbytery in France and this may quite likely be true, its postal subscription list is very great in proportion to the total number of its subscribers, but it is difficult on the other hand to

obtain it at a Paris newspaper kiosk. And whether the town clergy read it as much, especially those who are interested in the social movements, is another matter. The fact that it enters the country rectories would to many be a doubtful recommendation; the *Morning Post* might quite legitimately claim the same feat in England.

Nevertheless, much of the matter and arrangement is good. M. Guiraud, an ex-professor of Besancon University, writes principally on politics, history and literary criticism with real ability and knowledge, and is never guilty of lack of charity towards other religions and other nationalities; the writer who disguises himself as " Pierre l'ermite " is not always so endowed with kindliness, especially where England is concerned, but his style is of a lighter kind, differing from that of M. Guiraud, but gifted with great penetrating wisdom in matters of social life and morals, and his experience as a priest of human nature undoubtedly stands him in good stead.

It should be noted that this journal is an official organ and supported the Vatican in its recent condemnation of *L'Action Française*, although it had at one time enjoyed an anti-republican reputation. Another tendency which has been inclined to change recently we are glad to note is the habit of sneering at politics and policy, a tendency common in many other French newspapers of less repute than *La Croix*.

This paper is really controlled by a company, La Bonne Presse, which owns other publications. When the French bishops appeal to the faithful to support the Catholic press, it is invariably the publications of this organisation that are meant. Other publications consist of children's weeklies, insets for parochial magazines and the illustrated *Pèlerin*. There are also provincial organs in other parts of France published in connection with *La Croix*.

The headquarters are situated in an imposing

street in Paris, the Rue Bayard, and there is a large and up-to-date printing plant. A feature of the composing room is the employment of women as linotype operators. Undoubtedly this is work that can be done as efficiently or more so by women than by men, but it would be interesting to have the views of the London Society of Compositors or the Typographical Association upon such a procedure in England, where at present it is unknown. It is also a trifle surprising that whereas it is a doctrine among many French Catholics that a woman's place is in the home, not in the factory, that the one Catholic daily paper should set such an example; but doubtless the difficulty of obtaining male labour in France for many industries, owing to family limitation, is largely the cause of it.

The provinces besides the provincial editions of *La Croix* mentioned above also boast other Catholic newspapers. One of the principal is the *Ouest-Eclair*, which began its career at Rennes during the appeal of Dreyfus in that city; it has a large, if not the largest, circulation over Anjou, Brittany and the West generally. Like Monsieur Montier's Philippins it has stood for the principle that it is possible to be both a good Catholic and a loyal Republican, and despite opposition and suspicion from extremists on both sides, the Republicans who thought that Catholicism was synonymous with monarchy and the extreme Catholics of the West who thought that Republicanism was synonymous with atheism, it has crushed opposition by sheer merit and genius for organisation on the part of its owners.

Perhaps the most official Catholic publication in France would be the *Nouvelles Religieuses* published by the Bureau Catholique de Presse which appears twice a month. It has mainly an ecclesiastical appeal and would not be read by the layman; it largely concerns itself with official decrees of the Vatican and the French hierarchy, but its foreign news is

readable and well-informed, though often coloured by prejudice. The *Almanach Catholique Français*, published by the Catholic house of Bloud and Gay, is full of much useful information and is an annual something after the style of the *Official Year Book of the Church of England*. The house of Plonnourrit also publishes many Catholic books (it has Thureau-Dangin's *La Renaissance Catholique en Angleterre*, Bazin's *De Foucauld* and Montier's *Essaims Nouveaux*, among others to its credit), but, of course, this house is for general publishing, and does not, any more than other French publishing houses, confine itself specifically to Catholic authors.

In connection with the social movement a remarkable organisation sprang up over twenty years ago known as the *Action Populaire*, whose works are published by the Editions Spes in Paris. Monsieur Jacquot's book, for instance, in which he describes how he interfered in the Peugeot strike at Audincourt, is published by them. It was founded at Reims in 1903. M. Cetty of Mulhouse said of its first publication, the *Guide Social*, that German Social Catholicism, not even the *Volksverein*, had never produced anything in comparison to it. It started with a series of yellow-backed tracts and the *Guide Social*. Five years after began its first periodical the *Revue Verte* and in 1909 it took in hand the *Association Catholique*, which became the *Mouvement social*. In the same year it began to hold conferences at Reims, somewhat on the " Semaine Sociale " plan.

Then it grew bolder. It issued in 1911 a big book of nearly a thousand pages, under the title of the *Année Sociale Catholique*, which contained all the useful information given in a year-book. In the same year it organised a Congress at Paris, at which Count Albert de Mun represented France, Mr. Belloc England, and other distinguished Catholics came as representatives of other countries. Until the out-

break of the Great War it had produced in the eleven years of its existence 320 yellow tracts of 5,000 copies each, 117 other tracts, 59 books, four volumes of *Année Sociale*, three periodicals accounting for 26,000 subscribers and many other small publications. And besides all this publication work, it was regularly organising conferences. For instance, one organised at Reims in March 1912 contained among its members three vicars-general (the vicar-general is the most important functionary in a French diocese after the bishop), besides heads of seminaries and other delegates, presided over by the Cardinal Bishop of Reims.

The *Action Populaire* had more than its share of misfortune in the Great War, because not only were its activities suspended, but the German shells destroyed the buildings and plant within seven weeks of its outbreak. But evidently the Vatican thought its work was of the utmost importance, for within a month of the Armistice, in 1918, Pope Benedict XV. sent 10,000 francs to its director and impressed upon him the urgent necessity for setting the machinery in motion again as soon as possible. It set to work immediately to reconstitute its forces, and after much devoted labour of its staff has been able to do wonders. Two journals, the *Peuple de France* and the old *Revue Verte* began to appear again. A new collection of yellow tracts was put out. Among its books were *L'Eglise et le Problème social* and *L'Eglise et le Problème économique* of R. P. Coulet, M. Arnou's work on *The Share of the Workers in the Management of Industry*, M. Brun's *Causeries Agricoles*, and a novel, *Quand l'âme est droite*. It also collaborates with other publications such as the magazine of the *Federation gymnastique et sportive des patronages de France*.

There is also an information bureau which is most useful. It would be difficult to mention any Anglican organisation to correspond with the *Action Populaire*

exactly, but the Research Department of the English Labour Party does similar work in the realm of politics. Then there is its lecturing work and organisation of conferences, and this is not confined to France, but it has spread to Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, Switzerland and even Canada, though it does not seem to have done anything among English Roman Catholics as yet. It has earned praise from all sides for its magnificent work.

Its aims are thus expressed: "The longer the bitter experience inaugurated by Marx, achieved by Bolshevism, continues, the more far-seeing employers and commonsense workmen understand that reason, and their own interests are compelling men to work together, for the common good.

"It is the workman who represents the dignity of labour. He has woken up to this of late. He wants his masters to realise this.

"The employer represents authority. Absorbed by worries of an economic nature, by technical questions and competition, he wants his men to work with him and to realise his difficulties.

"The master and man together remind us that money has its proper place as a help, but not as a master. For usury by its secret and fraudulent action exploits against the moral law those who work, the masters as much as the men.

"So economic problems present on both sides complicated cases of conscience. The cost of living, reduction of wages, action by trades' unions, hours of labour, security, the power of money, are all difficult questions which require an answer.

"As there are engineers for machinery, there must also be persons competent to give answers on these questions. Masters imperfectly informed run the risk of mistaking the caricature for the picture; a proletariat with no education on social matters will see an enemy where there is no enemy, and will waste its energies and money.

" The programme of the *Action Populaire* consists in cessation from social strife, mutual respect for justice and charity according to Christian principles." The programme goes on to say how it hopes to achieve these ends by organisation and education on these matters. Judging by what it has done it would seem to have achieved a great deal already, despite the unfortunate set-back during the war.

It might be opportune to mention here that at Strasburg since the elections of 1924, after which attempts were made to persecute religion, an excellent *Bureau d'Information* was set up in the Rue Wimpfehling. It issues an excellent monthly publication, *Notre Droit,* of which the Editions Spes are the Paris agents. This publication particularly interests itself in the problem of religious education in elementary schools and it has printed a special series of articles describing the systems in vogue in other countries, of which England is one. One of the organisers of this propaganda bureau is Professor Koszul, the principal teacher of English in Strasburg University, a man who has accomplished successfully a none too easy task, the translation of Shakespeare's plays into French.

CHAPTER XIII.

ULTIMATE THINGS.

IN a little known corner of South Eastern France, there is a marshy lane that leads into a little wood. Beyond the wood there are some rough stones set up for the most part more than a hundred years ago after the Congress of Vienna, some fifty or hundred metres apart from each other, depicting upon the one side a strange looking bear, the symbol of Bern and a cruel Protestant tyranny, and upon the other a rudely chiselled letter F. These stones mark the boundary between the French republic and the Swiss confederation. Fifty years ago the letter F became a D, when the Treaty of Frankfurt gave Alsace to Germany, but within the last few years the D has been altered back again to F. Beneath the wood is a disused mill battered by shells during the Great War, and beyond it, in Switzerland, an inn, and behind the inn a skittle alley. There is no more peaceful spot in the whole of Europe, and the silence is rarely broken save by the noise of the balls in the skittle alley and the sound of voices in the inn.

It has been remarked by more than one writer that the great battlefields of the world are usually places of silence, and Largin Mill is no exception to this rule. Strangely enough no tourists have yet discovered it; the Alsatian township of Pfetterhouse and the Swiss village of Bonfol are some five or six kilometres distant, and these places are both small. Yet it may fairly rank among the great historical spots of Europe, for it is at this place that there was brought to an end that long, sinewy line that stretched from the sea to what the newspapers during the years between 1914 and 1918 used to

call falsely the "Swiss Mountains"; for this little jutting-out piece of Swiss territory known locally as the "Bec du Canard" or Drake's Beak" in the foothills of the Jura has more of a resemblance to a Hertfordshire coppice than to the snow-clad heights on the Alps.

Yet it is good to stand at this place, where the neutral territory of Switzerland barred the way to the combatants of the Great War, to walk to it along the muddy lane from the Pfetterhouse high road, where a wayside post marks the line of the trenches with the simple words, "Ici fut repoussé l'envahisseur, 1914—1918." It is a good place in which to reflect upon the future of Europe, upon the history of the Catholic Church, upon civilisation and our ultimate destiny. For not only was this place a field of battle, but it is a place where civilisations and races, differing widely, mingle.

To the South lie the Swiss, a confused jumble of races and tongues, knit together for purposes of defence originally, and for those of commerce to-day. In almost equal proportions are the Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity blended among them, but with them this book is not concerned.

But Eastward of the frontier stones stand the great welter of German races which during the later nineteenth century mingled into the German empire. They are full of philosophies, marked for the most part by pessimism, a crude kindliness in their family life, and a childlike reverence for old things, the folk of Christmas trees, fairy tales and sentimentality. They are subservient to their masters, overbearing to conquered peoples, industry of an intense sort rather than cleverness has placed them in a high position in the European scheme of things, and an ability for painstaking research has given them a reputation for learning.

Their prevailing religions are Protestant. It is

difficult to speak of one Protestant Church, for it is the tendency for this form of the Christian religion to be disintegrating rather than uniting, to split into bodies and sects rather than to found an united Church; such attempts as have been made towards unity have been based upon the conception that difficulties of dogma can be ignored, whereas a true unity can only be achieved by facing boldly the things than keep opposing sections apart. It was a fashion of the Victorian age to suppose that there was a natural affinity between the German and English peoples not only upon a supposed identity of race, but also upon the alleged bond of a common Protestant religion; there is the historical example of the late Prince Consort who attempted to set up in Jerusalem joint "bishops" over the British Anglicans and German Lutherans in Palestine, an attempt happily doomed to failure, but one that assisted to drive John Henry Newman from the English Church. It is true that since the war there has been a movement among certain German Lutherans to move in a Catholic direction, to place the Eucharist as the principal service, to allow the Sacrament of priestly absolution to be given to those that desire it, to demand the use of vestments and ornaments to be introduced into the churches. Yet even this movement has been weakened by its divisions, though it has attracted a certain amount of attention in this country.

Yet it must not be overlooked that there are large portions of the German-speaking countries of Europe that are Catholic, Austria, Bavaria, the Rhineland. But there has been little intercourse between German Roman Catholics and English Churchmen. The Germans are not a missionary people as are the French; German Catholics have taken as a whole little interest in the Catholic revival in England. There is Oberammergau, a mecca for English churchmen who can find inspirations in the most wonder-

ful religious drama of the world, but this is a solitary instance of comradeship and understanding which cannot be found elsewhere in Catholic Germany.

But turn Westward towards France. The philosophies are few, but there is an intense passion for following a theory or a dogma out to its very end. The French mind cannot compromise, whether it lie in the building of a great cathedral, the enacting of an anti-clerical law, the conviction and thence the preaching of the truth of the Catholic Faith. For everything and every conception is deduced *à outrance*. This is what is meant by the logic of the French nation, or to speak more correctly, its powers of deduction. As the late Mr. Clutton Brock said, "There is a peculiar beauty in the French logic; it is thought become passionate but not bewildered with passion, the idea pushed as far as it can be pushed, for the love of it, as the Gothic idea was carried as far as it could be carried at Amiens or Rheims." Look at this spot at the end of the great line extending up to the English Channel, and to within thirty miles of the English coast. For English troops fought in this line and bore the fiercest of the attack and by doing so broke a tradition. For from the time of the third Edward until the Earl of Beaconsfield (with the solitary exception of the Crimean venture), France had been the national enemy, and in later times English statesmen had usually found an ally with one or other of the German states, and more particularly with Prussia.

The significance is profound. It must be admitted that as regards the politicians the change may only be ephemeral. There are signs that the English people are already tired of this alliance so foreign to their traditions, and this has been undoubtedly exploited by the war-time Pacificist as much as has been possible. But politics lie outside the scope of this book. The English Church has once more

begun to look out over Catholic Europe and she has used France and France's ally and near neighbour, Belgium, as the doors to a closer understanding and sympathy. *Ecclesia Anglicana* is at last beginning to realise that she is not merely the Church of England, nor even the Church of the British Empire, though that ideal is fine enough, but she is part of the Church Universal and of the great Catholic Church whose origin is Europe and Rome.

For this happy result we must be profoundly thankful to Almighty God. The "Conversations of Malines," as they are called, are a result of a closer understanding between England and France, and France's small neighbour, Belgium. They did not actually take place on French soil, but they were largely the inspiration of a French priest, the abbé Portal, they included at least one great French theologian, Monseigneur Batiffol, among the conversationalists, and the chairman, the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, though not actually a Frenchman, was born near Waterloo, near one of the many battlefields where French and English have been ever opposed during the past six hundred years, and was further a scholar of the great University of Louvain, whose foundation five hundred years ago was a formidable rival to the University of Paris. The Church of England is no longer looking forward to a series of common negations, but to a common and living Faith, satisfying the needs of all men, of all ages, of all parts of the earth.

But there are those that say that the Catholic Church is doomed, that it is based upon fetishism and superstition, that the modern mind is too great for it, that it makes no appeal to the intellect. To this there are naturally many answers. We can say quite truthfully that what is of God must continue, that it has continued, and that if it were not of God it would have crumbled into dust and perished long ago.

Yet if this answer does not satisfy, we can point to the great men of intellect the Church has produced. France, at any rate, that can produce theologians like Duchesne and Batiffol, scientists like Pasteur, directors of souls like the abbé Huvelin, mystics like Soeur Thérèse, soldiers like Foch, novelists like Bourget, need have no fear of any accusation of backwardness. There has undoubtedly been a great revival of religion in France, and a good deal of this is due to the war. Certainly the first few years after the war gave great grounds for hope. The question now is, How far has this promise been sustained? The question of how far a nation is religious is always a difficult one to answer. It is preferable perhaps to leave it unanswered. The mere impressions of a foreigner who spends a few weeks in a country and visits a few select churches are apt to be very misleading. Should some Frenchman come over to England and visit say All Saints', Margaret Street, and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, he might easily form the impression that Anglicanism was very strong, while if he were to visit the City of London churches on a Sunday he might say that it appeared to him to be a dying religion. Yet, probably the mean between the two would be nearer the truth. In the same way the writer has found churches in France packed to the doors and he has also found empty churches, so he must be forgiven if he prefers to leave unanswered the question how far Frenchmen to-day go to church.

But the main fact remains that as long as the French clergy continue to lead lives of self-denying devotion to the people, as they are undoubtedly doing to-day, the Catholic Church will continue to be a power to be reckoned with in France. And though the Conversations of Malines may lead no farther for a time, nevertheless they have done at least this good that they have interested French and English churchmen in each other. May this interest

continue! Though French and English are so utterly different by temperament, they have, as we have endeavoured to show, many points in contact. Let us continue to learn from each other. We Anglicans have much stiffness and insularity to get rid of. A young English lady staying with a French priest not long ago was asked by him one evening to go with the other guests into the chapel for compline. "Shall I get my hat?" she asked. "Pourquoi?" came the reply, "le Bon Dieu n'aime pas le formalisme." Does our Anglican worship tend to too much formalism? At any rate we ought to ask ourselves this question. We are constantly talking about fellowship, but do we always attain it? When the writer once spoke to another priest about the wisdom of employing coloured colonial troops side by side with whites, he was answered by the retort: "Pourquoi pas, monsieur? Ils sont Français." We can learn much from the French.

English and French fought side by side along the line that stretched from Dunkirk to Largin Mill. Will our two Churches ever one day fight side by side in a greater war?

We think that this, under God, will be possible, if only we learn the right things from the French Church, not the wrong ones. Do not let us copy her tawdriness, but let us imitate her deep devotion, her mysticism. Was it not that great Christian the late Baron von Hugel who declared he owed everything to the abbé Huvelin, de Foucauld's friend, "a man of vehement, seething passions, and of rare forces of mind, whose will of iron, by long heroic submission to grace, had attained to a splendid tonic tenderness. I owe to this Frenchman more than to any man I have ever known in the flesh. Now he would have remained incredibly smaller had he listened to the subtle explainers away of the renunciation, visible as well as invisible, preached and practised broadcast by the central figures of the

Synoptic Gospels, and if he had settled comfortably into a married life."

The question of clerical celibacy is too much of a controversial question to enter into here, but the Baron felt the great appeal of the life of sacrifice which the celibate life entails, he felt the great appeal of heroicity which the French Church makes in the lives of its saints and its priests. And surely this is an appeal that should be a beacon light to the adventure loving Englishman who seeks a religion that appeals to his imagination and to his sense of the heroic. In days when the Anglican Church seems to be fast running on to the rocks of bureaucracy and "the well-organised parish," days which alas! do not seem to be making (though with certain rare exceptions) for full churches, surely there is a message which the French Church, ever missionary in its outlook, has to us and to the world?

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